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The Loremaster's Guide to Mythic Battles

A Supplemental Resource for The One Ring™ Roleplaying Game

James R. Brown and S.W. Hodgman

-credits-

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Dedicated to Francesco Nepitello & Dominic McDowall-Thomas,
Thank you for developing a remarkable roleplaying game in a setting we adore.

We wrote this guide primarily as a help for Loremasters wishing to compose their own large battles in Middle-earth. While the main rulebooks provide the foundational mechanics for all combat, it is the supplemental adventures *Words of the Wise* and those found in *Tales from Wilderland* that really illustrate the wonderful possibilities of how to use those mechanics in innovative ways. Originally, I produced a document called Mass Combat Rules, which was completed prior to the aforementioned works. After the release of *Tales from Wilderland*, I went back to the drawing board and began this project. Coming to the realisation that I would need a co-author to help me finish, I sought and found Scott Hodgman, a fellow member of the Cubicle7 Forum, a fan of TOR, and a notable Tolkien Loremaster in his own right. After a wonderful period of collaboration, we were finally ready to bring you the fully complete document you now hold in your hands.

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Part 1: -Introduction-

So began a battle that none had expected...
Upon one side were the Goblins and the Wild Wolves,
and upon the other were Elves and Men and Dwarves.

In a land darkening with Shadow, a company of adventurers will soon enough find themselves in the midst of mythic battles, fighting as members of the Free Peoples of Middle-earth — the protectors of Wilderland. Perhaps they will join an alliance of Beornings, Dwarves, and Woodman to route the legions of Goblins and Wargs that have infested the Misty Mountains. Maybe they will fight alongside the Elves of Mirkwood against a tormenting army of Spiders threatening the Woodland Realm; or possibly, they will accompany a new warband of Bardings and Men of the Lake, who guard their villages along the Running River, ready to battle the swarms of Werewolves and Vampires sent from their breeding nests in the Mountains of Mirkwood.

When battles involve large numbers of combatants — along with the fellowship of companions — special suggestions may be needed for how to run them, which is the purpose of this guide. Very easily, a game can get bogged down with every detail, leading to long sessions of dice rolling and boredom. One great way to avoid this is to make sure the story of the player-heroes remains central to the game, and the fate of their allies, as important as it is, is told in the backdrop of the tale. Therefore, we have done our best to expand the ideas of the core rules and supplements while avoiding new mass combat rules that feel like a miniatures game or a strategy board-game. We've also tried to maintain the wonderful commitment to Tolkien's work that the authors have displayed. Our goal has been to make it possible for Loremasters to present battles and sieges in a way very close to the source material. Within these pages, Loremasters can discover the tools for making those battles meaningful, memorable, and mythic.

Chances are, those of you reading this guide are Loremasters yourselves. Therefore, from this point on, we will address 'you' directly in the text. Take these suggestions and use them as you wish. One of the great qualities of *The One Ring* roleplaying game is its wonderful flexibility. In the course of creating this document, there were many revisions to preserve that quality. So enjoy the read and have fun changing things to suit your style of play!

The Ethics of the Wise

While the subject of this guide is warfare, we do not recommend glorifying war or killing — especially if you want to capture the feel of Tolkien's work. It is very clear that the wise of Middle-earth hold to a common ethical principle governing the defeat of evil. In summary, the wise believe that it is never acceptable to defeat an enemy, regardless of how cruel that enemy is, by the same cruel practices of that enemy. Evil actions will not lead to the defeat of evil or to true victory. By refusing to take the Ring in order to destroy Sauron himself, did not Gandalf, Elrond, Aragorn, Galadriel, and Faramir demonstrate this principle? Did they not show their belief that the Ring would turn them into a copy of Sauron?

Tolkien's Values

The ethical principle expressed above is a direct reflection of Tolkien's values, which he admits inevitably get worked into an author's writing. In a letter he wrote in 1956, Tolkien speaks about this:

> [*The Lord of the Rings*] is a "fairy-story," but one written — according to the belief I once expressed in an extended essay "On Fairy-stories" that they are the proper audience — for adults. Because I think that fairy story has its own mode of reflecting "truth," different from allegory, or (sustained) satire, or "realism," and in some ways more powerful. But first of all it must succeed just as a tale, excite, please, and even on occasion move, and within its own imagined world be accorded (literary) belief. To succeed in that was my primary objective.

> But, of course, if one sets out to address "adults" (mentally adult people anyway), they will not be pleased, excited, or moved unless the whole, or the incidents, seem to be about something worth considering, more e.g., than mere danger and escape: there must be some relevance to the "human situation" (of all periods). So something of the teller's own reflections and "values" will inevitably get worked in. (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, 232-33)

"Get worked in," in Tolkien's case, seems like a gross understatement. The "defeat of evil" ethical principle is repeated so many times by his characters in various ways and scenes that to leave it out of any Middle-earth tale would be to change a core ingredient of the setting. This places the burden on the "teller" to familiarise himself with Tolkien's ethics and values, lest he merely reflect his own, which may not end up feeling anything like the Middle-earth we know and love.

Mythic Battles

"Open war lies before [us all], with Sauron or against him."

Myths are the stories that tell us about the most important ideas and truths of a culture. They are often presented as epic poems or ballads in ancient literature, but for us, they can also be told while roleplaying around a table or sitting in a parlour. According to Tolkien, if our stories are to be "successful," then they must give us a glimpse of an "underlying reality or truth," often dealing with themes such as heroism, love, and healing.

You have an opportunity to present battles that transcend physical description: lifting players — by imagination and intellect — out of their own realities into fantasy, in order to comprehend themselves wholly. This process is what Tolkien called "sub-creation." Through meaningful language you can speak a secondary world into existence, but it will only be a *good* fairy-tale if that world has its own "inner consistency of reality" — that is, it must speak to the players' lives also.

As human beings, we are all fascinated with the desire to understand the world in which we live. Even though we have made poor choices, we have an inner yearning to be restored to uncorrupted times; a longing to heal. The myths we share by playing *The One Ring* can satisfy these basic human needs. Through your storytelling efforts, you can lead players out of the sometimes pessimistic and hopeless attitude of our current world.

Perhaps your goals for battles can follow the professor's own recipe for a good fairy-tale, which we will paraphrase here and put into the context of roleplaying:

- First, present players with material that helps them to recover their appreciation of the simple and humble things of life, like gardens, fireworks, parties, and a good laugh. Even in the middle of war, their character's trousers can fall to their ankles, and for some reason it would seem funnier than if it had happened elsewhere. A greater appreciation for belts may follow, along with a reminder that even the greatest of heroes is subject to embarrassing moments. These kinds of events can spark memories of real life situations among the players. Humour and reflection are great tools to help you with this goal.

- Then, allow your players to escape their own narrow and distorted view of the real world by giving their characters reasons to hope and believe they can — and should — make a difference in the imaginary world, however small or powerless they think they are.

> "I am [still willing to help]," said Mr. Butterbur. "More than ever. Though I don't know what the likes of me can do against, against —" he faltered.
>
> "Against the Shadow in the East," said Strider quietly. "Not much, Barliman, but every little helps."

- Finally, let them experience consolation that leads to joy. You don't have to "fix" every battle so that the player-heroes always win and never experience pain or loss, but if you run your game without consolation, you risk failing Tolkien's recipe for a successful fairy-tale. Let the professor explain:

> The consolation of fairy-stories, the joy of the happy ending: or more correctly of the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous "turn" (for there is no true end to any fairy-tale): this joy, which is one of the things which fairy-stories can produce supremely well, is not essentially "escapist," nor "fugitive." In its fairy-tale — or otherworld — setting, it is a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur. It does not deny the existence of *dyscatastrophe*, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat and in so far *evangelium*, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief. ("On Fairy-Stories," in *The Monsters and the Critics, and Other Essays*, 153)

The Training of Hobbits

Near the end of *The Return of the King*, "The Scouring of the Shire" is only possible because of the prior training of Gandalf. He had been a wise teacher, speaking words of truth to the hobbits, introducing them to important people, and guiding them along their journey from naive comfortability in Hobbit holes to victory over the Shadow and friendship with the King. Throughout the War of the Ring, their body, heart, and wits had been tested, until finally, when the Ring was destroyed, they no longer needed Gandalf: they had matured in wisdom and valour.

In the Shire, they succeeded all by themselves. Frodo had begun thinking like Gandalf and he convinced his companions that they should rescue "the Chief," Lotho Pimple, from the ruffians, even though Pippin had said, "Destroy him[.]" In the end, it was discovered that Lotho had been murdered by the order of Saruman, but Frodo was able to show Saruman the mercy of Gandalf. "You have grown, Halfling," [Saruman said to Frodo]. "Yes, you have grown very much. You are wise, and cruel. You have robbed my revenge of sweetness, and now I must go hence in bitterness, in debt to your mercy. I hate it and you!"

Over the course of your campaigns, you can provide your player-heroes with the same kind of training, using Gandalf or one of their patrons to provide support and counsel, and to prepare them for the battles that they will face in the future. Using wise speeches, strategic introductions to key Loremaster characters, and just the right amount of intervention, you will add to the mythic quality of your battles and your games in general. There will be a sense that not only are the companions learning how to take up sword, axe, and bow against true villainy, but there is a lesson for the players as well: fight life's battles with truth, righteousness, mercy, and peace and then you will surely be victorious.

Storytelling Mode

One of the first questions to ask yourself before designing a mythic battle concerns your choice of storytelling *mode*. As the chief narrator of the adventure, you decide what approach to take. Do you want the players to experience the fight in detail? Or do you want to tell the story of the battle in a quicker fashion as an overview? *The One Ring* core rules offers either mode as a valid choice for storytelling (see page 19 of the Adventurer's Book), referring to them in another way as an episode and narrative time respectively.

When a battle is conducted as an episode, it does not mean that every scene of the battlefield will be played using the combat rules — this would be an insurmountable task — only combats involving the player-heroes will be handled in such a fashion, while the remainder of the battle will be narrated by you.

In contrast, a battle directed in narrative time may occasionally include detailed character combats, but the majority of the action will unfold through storytelling, both by you and your players. This is not to say that narrative time excludes dice rolling. Not at all! It simply means that longer segments of story time will pass between rolls and that a focus on narration is maintained.

In deciding the storytelling mode, you are also selecting a specific set of rules to govern your game. Episode mode uses the core combat rules you are already familiar with, but narrative time mode uses the **Battle & Siege Resolution Rules** we have created specifically for this guide. An entire part of this work has been dedicated to each of these modes.

No matter what set of rules you use, our hope is that these suggestions assist you in crafting a successful tale; one that everyone is pleased with, excited about, occasionally moved by, and absolutely believes in!

Part 2: -narrative time mode-

'I wish Merry was here,' he heard himself saying,
and quick thoughts raced through his mind,
even as he watched the enemy
come charging to the assault...

Battles are unavoidable in Middle-earth, though a hero may wish to avoid them, preferring the laughter of friends around a table to the crashing of shields on the battlefield. However, as the events of the world unfold, the purpose of the Dark Lord is revealed through his servants: they have been bred to destroy the world of Men and they will not allow that peace. A hero's call to arms is necessary for the continued good of all the Free Peoples. War is at hand.

The combat rules found in the core set have been designed for episode mode, where the details of a conflict are played out round by round. But what if you wanted a quicker way to tell the story of a battle? There are some battles only meant to be told as an overview. War, after all, is a very gloomy business. One or two scenes of close-up action may be important for the advancement of the plot, but mostly it is the thoughts and feelings of the heroes that need expression as they face the discomforts and distresses of war.

With some creative additions to the combat rules, supplemental materials, such as *Tales from Wilderland*, have done an excellent job of providing the feel of being in the thick of massive battles. These additions include great devices such as **Battle Events**, an **Allies in Battle table**, and situational rules governing engagements and tactics, etc. But even with the inclusion of these elements, the episode mode of storytelling does not change as the combat rules remain central to the action.

In order to find a quicker way to tell the story of a battle, we need to change the storytelling mode to narrative time. This, in turn, requires a new set of rules.

Perspective

As the chief narrator and director of the story, you will have the privilege of setting *perspective*. This means that you will select the viewpoint of *your* liking — one that magnifies things crucial to the plot. If that means you hand storytelling initiative to just one player who interprets the results of the battle as seen through her character's eyes, then so be it — that is the perspective you have chosen. This will give her the chance to talk about things important to her, such as friends, home, sunlight and green grasses. You may also call for multiple perspectives of the same battle which, when woven together, form a larger tale. The exercise of changing perspective can be a source of enjoyment in your games that you did not expect. It is a simple method for involving players in ways that dice rolling cannot accomplish.

Battle & Siege Resolution Rules

Battles and sieges can be complex, involving multiple companies of mounted combatants, foot-soldiers, and even machines of war. The rules presented in this part should help you narrate these aspects without the need for time consuming rolls or stat blocks. They are meant for quickly summarising the affects of a battle or siege on the companions, but they can also provide glimpses of detailed action during momentary lapses into episode mode. As you will see, we have drawn heavily from the rules governing journeys to bring familiarity to the process.

Overview

In episode mode, combats are conducted in rounds representing roughly thirty seconds of action. In narrative time mode, battles and sieges are conducted in assault waves that may last one hour or one day each; it is entirely up to you and the unfolding story.

After an opening scene, which provides a description of the sizes of the forces and their core tactics, a series of assault waves will measure the performance of the Free Peoples, as well as test the Endurance of each companion. Think of this as you would a journey, where the affects of travelling over a number of days are determined by Fatigue tests.

When one assault wave ends, a new one begins and the relative strength of numbers between the Free Peoples and the Shadow forces rises and falls. This leads to the end of the engagement where the companions may participate in a **Last Stand** episode to simply finish the narrative or to improve their results. To accomplish this, you should apply the following five steps.

1. Opening Scene

At the outset of every battle or siege (and at the beginning of every assault wave), you will hold storytelling initiative and set the scene by describing various elements, such as the strength of numbers of the engaged forces, the threat level of the Shadow forces, the engagement mood, and the core tactics of the Free Peoples. Player-heroes should be given a chance to affect these details through creative roleplaying and clever application of their abilities (see the sidebar 'Player-hero Intervention').

Strength of Numbers

The term *company* or *great company* may be used as a default description for most forces in Middle-earth representing anywhere from one-hundred to ten-thousand or more soldiers. For forces larger than this (upwards of twenty-five, fifty, or even one-hundred thousand) the terms *army*, *host*, or *great host* seem most appropriate. Anything smaller (between ten and a couple hundred soldiers) can be called a *band*. Sometimes an Enemy force can be referred to as a *legion*, especially those whose strength is around ten-thousand.

In addition to these general descriptions, you should also establish the starting relative strengths between the Free Peoples and the Shadow in your narration. Use one of the following statements from the table below to guide you, noting that the advantage usually belongs to the Shadow in these dark times.

Over the course of several assault waves, the statements for relative strength of numbers will shift up and down toward a victory for the Free Peoples or a victory for the Shadow. For example, if "The Shadow significantly **outnumbers** the Free Peoples" and they roll a *Drums of Doom* result on the **Assault Wave table** (see Step 2: Tides of War), the statement will shift two steps up to "**The Shadow has Prevailed**" and the engagement will conclude decisively. As the narrator, it will be up to you to *interpret* the actual sizes of the forces remaining after each assault wave and when it is appropriate for the Shadow forces to give up and turn back, even if they haven't been defeated through strength of numbers.

Relative Strength of Numbers Table:

The Shadow has Prevailed.
The Free Peoples are ***overwhelmed in numbers*** by the Shadow.
The Shadow significantly ***outnumbers*** the Free Peoples.
Both sides are near enough ***evenly sized***.
The Free Peoples are ***greater*** than the Shadow forces.
The Shadow remnant is ***overpowered in numbers*** by the Free Peoples.
The Free Peoples are Victorious!

After several assault waves, the Free Peoples and Shadow forces are near enough evenly sized. What began as a clash between great hosts has now dwindled to a battle between hundreds, both sides suffering heavy losses due to their wrath kindled to madness. If the Free Peoples hold the line or achieve any more objectives, the Shadow forces will turn back.

Threat Level of the Shadow

Puny and weak Goblins, led by low-ranking Orc-chieftains, may present very little threat to the Free Peoples, but when they are accompanied by fearsome Hill-trolls, the danger of the battle or siege increases. For the player-heroes, this means an increased number of Endurance tests per assault wave (see Step 3: Blood & Tears).

The **Shadow Threat table** provides an average attribute rating and description to help you assign an overall threat level to the Shadow forces. You can simply add up the attribute ratings of the major types of enemies in the conflict and calculate their average rating, or you can use the descriptions to guide you.

Once you have assigned an average rating or description, note the number of Endurance tests each hero will make per assault wave during the battle or siege.

Engagement Mood

As part of the opening scene, you must decide the general temperament of both sides going into the conflict. This decision will directly affect the lethality of all failed Endurance tests on the companions. (If you prefer, you can make a Success die roll to determine the starting mood.) Moods are very fluid and can wax or wane as the narrative unfolds. It is up to you to decide when and how to change the mood, but the player-heroes should also be afforded opportunities to influence it.

The basic engagement moods, in decreasing threat and ferocity, are listed on the **Engagement Mood table** below.

Engagement Mood Table:

Battle can be described as...	Endurance loss per failed test
wrath kindled to madness	6
grim determination	5
a bold assault	4
a war of cunning tactics	3
wary and elusive	2
a war of attrition	1

Shadow Threat Table:

Average Enemy Attribute Rating	Description	Number of Endurance Tests Per Assault Wave
1-2	*weak (puny Goblins)*	1
3-4	*tormenting (Orcs, Spiders)*	2
5-6	*worthy (Wolves, Vampires)*	3
7-8	*fearsome (Trolls)*	4
9-10	*lethal (Mountain Trolls)*	5
11-12	*otherworldly (Dragons)*	6

Core Tactics of the Free Peoples

After you have described the sizes of the forces, the threat of the Shadow, and the engagement mood of the conflict, you and the players will settle what the core tactics of the Free Peoples will be for the assault wave. Core tactics include two basic elements fundamental to every battle and siege: command objectives and areas of engagement.

- ***Command objectives*** are the stated goals of the Free Peoples (see Appendix C: Command Objectives). Narrating the command objectives kickstarts the action and lays out possible endings for the engagement. You can allow the players to spend as little or as much time on command objectives as you wish, possibly roleplaying important speeches and directives. The type of engagement and whether or not the Free Peoples are defending or attacking are key factors for stating command objectives.

- ***Areas of engagement*** signify where the captains and lords have deployed forces on the battlefield during a particular conflict. Every battle or siege is unique and will include specific formations different from other engagements. For the player-heroes, areas of engagement become the locations where they choose to stand and fight. The decision where a player-hero fights during an assault is one of the most important one he can make. Ideally, these choices should reflect to some extent his proficiency and competency in certain Weapon and Common skills. For example, a player-hero proficient in **Bows** might take up position in the *Rear Guard* where other archers stand. Or, a player-hero with high **Inspire** skill might fight *At the Center* of a battlefield or stand *At the Gates* during a siege. If at least one hero is also a commander (see 'Player-hero Commanders'), he will decide what areas are active to deploy forces; otherwise, you decide.

The **Areas of Engagement table** below lists all the possible positions on a battlefield or in a siege. Notice that every position lists its own *optional* Endurance test TN. This is because players will be making a number of Endurance rolls each assault wave to test their individual performance (see 'Step 3: Blood & Tears'). The most dangerous positions (optionally) are *Amidst the Vanguard* and *The Main Assault*. The more dangerous the position chosen, however, the greater the opportunity to earn special honours, which can translate into gifts of Treasure, Standing, or even an additional Experience point later on (see 'Awards & Honours').

Areas of Engagement Table:

Battlefield-positions	Siege-positions	Endurance Test TN
In Reserve	In Reserve	10
Rear Guard	Engines of War	12
On the Flank	On the Wall	**14**
Skirmishers	Skirmishers	**14**
At the Center	At the Gates	16
Amidst the Vanguard	The Main Assault	18

Player-hero Intervention

While you are busy narrating the opening scene of the battle or siege, players also have an opportunity to influence the narrative. Building on the idea of 'Player-hero Intervention' (AB, 174), a player may attempt to make a case for directly or indirectly altering decisions you have made concerning the size of the Free Peoples forces, command objectives, engagement mood, areas of engagement, or anything else he can plausibly narrate using his abilities and resources. If you accept the player's tale, then he can "propose a task roll summarizing his possible intervention. Upon a successful roll, he briefly describes an alternative course of events describing the presence of his character or the effect of his influence."

2. Tides of War

When the details of the opening scene have been established, the battle or siege begins! The first assault wave commences with you or the players making a Feat die roll on the **Assault Wave table** below. The results of this roll will affect the progress of the Free Peoples and have ramifications on each companion's ability to endure.

Each result on the table has been given a name to quickly identify the effects of the roll and to assist you in narrating the outcomes of the battle or siege. If appropriate, you will need to change the relative strength of numbers statement by one step up or down in favor of the Shadow or the Free Peoples. *Drums of Doom* and *Shattered Shields* also affect the Damage amounts on companions that fail Endurance tests during Step 3: Blood & Tears.

Assault Wave Table:

👁	Drums of Doom	The Free Peoples are decimated and complete no command objectives. Change the relative strength of numbers by two steps in favor of the Shadow forces. All player-heroes double the amount of Damage they take on failed Endurance tests this assault wave.
1, 2, 3, or 4	Shattered Shields	Battle is fierce and casualties run deep among the Free Peoples; they achieve only a minor objective. All player-heroes double the amount of Damage they take on failed Endurance tests this assault wave. Change the relative strength of numbers by one step in favor of the Shadow forces.
5, 6, 7	The Line is Held	The Free Peoples hold their line and keep fighting, winning one or two command objectives.
8, 9, or 10	Night is Ending	A glimmer of hope arises as the Free Peoples push back their enemies and achieve several command objectives. Change the relative strength of numbers by one step in favor of the Free Peoples.
ᚠ	Will of the west	The bodies of Shadow creatures are strewn everywhere across the battlefield as a major command objective is completed. Change the relative strength of numbers by two steps in favor of the Free Peoples.

3. Blood & Tears

After the Free Peoples have made their roll on the **Assault Wave table** and all affects have been applied, the assault wave continues as the endurance of each player-hero is challenged through a number of **Endurance** tests.

Endurance Tests

The Battle & Siege Resolution rules add yet another type of test to those found on pages 28-30 of the Loremaster's Book: the **Endurance** test. Whereas failed Fatigue tests lead to an increased Fatigue score and possible Weariness, failed Endurance tests lead to a loss of Endurance points and possible unconsciousness and death.

An Endurance test is accomplished by rolling the Feat die and a number of Success dice equal to a character's **Battle** skill rating.

The default Target Number for all Endurance tests is 14. (You may instead use the **Areas of Engagement table** to set the TN, which is more representative of the danger of the chosen position.)

Endurance tests are related to the Heart Attribute (through the use of the **Battle** skill) and can profit from a Heart Attribute bonus.

For each instance that a player-hero fails an Endurance test, he loses a number of Endurance points set by the stated engagement mood of the Free Peoples and modified by the results of the Feat die roll on the **Assault Wave table**. This Damage is applied immediately.

Anytime a player-hero fails an Endurance test and the Feat die shows an result, he has suffered a **Piercing blow** or a **Battle Hazard** sequence has been triggered that the hero may or may not be a part of. The choice of consequence is up to you as the narrator and will largely depend on whether you want to temporarily switch to episode mode or not. If it doesn't matter either way, you can let the active player decide if he wants to take a **Piercing blow** or trigger a **Battle Hazard** episode; or you can simply roll a random Success die to determine what to do in each case.

Piercing Blows

Any hero that has taken a Piercing blow must make a Protection test (TN 14) to check whether his armour has protected him from taking a Wound. You may adjust the TN for the Protection test (typically by one level up or down) if you feel the weapons of the enemy justify it.

Protect Companion Action

Before a hero makes a Protection test, you may allow a companion to intervene on his behalf and declare a special 'Protect Companion' action. This works much like the special combat task found on page 163 of the Adventurer's Book but without the requirement of a combat stance. A hero may spend a point of Hope to take the Piercing blow himself. He must then make a Protection test to keep from taking a Wound.

It is important to note that the hero taking this action should be stationed in the same area of engagement as the one he is trying to protect.

States of Health

Players should follow all the normal rules of 'Life and Death' found on pages 142-144 of the Adventurer's Book. For example, a killing blow is executed when a hero has already taken one Wound and then he fails a Protection test to prevent a second Wound while at the same time he is reduced to zero Endurance.

Unconscious heroes are in danger of a *coup de grâce* on the battlefield. It is up to you to decide their fate. If you cannot decide, roll a Success die. On a roll of 1-3, their enemies kill them immediately. Otherwise, they survive the assault wave. It will be important for you to resolve this roll at the end of Step 4: Heroic Actions, however, as player-heroes may want to perform a heroic action to rescue them. If they do not, you can repeat this procedure every assault wave until the end of the battle.

Battle Hazards

When things are not going well for the companions, a **Battle Hazard** sequence can temporarily interrupt the broader narrative to present a quick episode of detailed and dangerous action. This kind of scene is meant to test the resolve and bravery of the heroes and to play out the story of a critical moment in the battle or siege.

If a **Battle Hazard** episode has been triggered, you should first roll a Feat die on the table below to determine the area of engagement where the action takes place. Any companions positioned in the area rolled will take part in the hazard. If the area of engagement rolled is not an active area for that particular battle or siege, choose the next available area down on the table.

If at least one character has been positioned at the selected area, then the sequence will be resolved normally by that hero. If no hero was stationed there beforehand, or other heroes want to join the active character(s), they may each spend a point of Hope to change positions to take part in the action. If no-one does so, the hazard is considered a failure and the Free Peoples suffer the stated consequences.

Flanks, Walls, & Gates

During the opening scene, heroes may be deployed to left or right flanks, east or west walls, or north or south gates, etc., according to the layout of the battlefield and the tactics of the Free Peoples commanders. When rolling on the **Battle Hazard table** to determine precisely where a hazard takes place, just determine randomly among flanks, walls, or gates when you roll those results.

Battle Hazard Table:

Feat Die Result	Battlefield-positions	Siege-positions
ᚠ	Player's Choice	
1	In Reserve	In Reserve
2	Rear Guard	Engines of War
3-4	On the Flank	On the Wall
5-6	Skirmishers	Skirmishers
7-8	At the Center	At the Gates
9-10	Amidst the Vanguard	The Main Assault
👁	The Loremaster chooses one active position not currently covered (if available)	

Sample Battle Hazard Episodes

The sample Battle Hazard episodes below provide you with an example of how to present a Battle Hazard episode to the player-heroes. Each of them includes a general description of what may have triggered the hazard, how to overcome it, and the conditions for failure.

Suggested areas of engagement for each episode are included in brackets next to the title, although they are not limited to these areas. You may use these samples as written, but you are encouraged to tailor each event according to the current battle or siege.

Cut Off the Head (At the Center, At the Gates, Amidst the Vanguard, The Main Assault)

An enemy captain or prominent leader, such as an Orc-Chieftain or a Hill-Troll Chief, is going berserk, attacking the heroes who must fight to eliminate it; escape is not an option. To increase the difficulty of this challenge, give the enemy leader some defenders. The Battle Hazard episode is lost if the heroes do not

succeed or if the hazard goes unchallenged; increase the Threat level of the Shadow by one level.

Protect the Commander (At the Center, At the Gates, Amidst the Vanguard, The Main Assault)
A Free Peoples' commander is under heavy attack and needs to be defended immediately against a maximum number of dangerous attackers (usually three). The heroes must use the *Protect Companion* special combat task to keep their leader from taking a Wound and possibly dying. If the commander dies, the heroes lose their source of inspiration and the Battle Hazard episode is lost. Heroes may not invoke an Attribute bonus on Endurance tests for the remainder of the battle.

Hold the Ground (On the Flank, On the Wall)
Shadow forces have broken through the defenses and are threatening to take control of a key area of the battlefield. This could be a tower, a trench, a section of forest, or any area that gives an advantage to the side that holds it. The heroes cannot allow a certain number of enemies to get by them and overtake the area. This means they must kill at a pace quick enough to engage new attackers as they arrive. The challenge should last 10+ rounds and each companion should receive one new attacker every round. If any new enemies cannot engage them because they already have their full compliment of attackers, they slip by. The Battle Hazard episode is lost when the heroes allow the pre-determined number of enemies to pass. During the next assault wave, the heroes will roll twice on the **Assault Wave table**, keeping the worst result. You can make this hazard more or less difficult by changing the number of enemies not allowed to pass, the number of rounds the episode will last, and the number of new enemies each hero will face every round.

Secret Strike (On the Flank, On the Wall, Skirmishers)
The enemy launches a secret strike against the Free Peoples who are busy fighting other battles. The companions must make a roll of **Awareness** (TN 16) to notice it in time before they are ambushed. Follow the rules for 'Being Ambushed' in the Loremaster's Book, pp. 42-43. There is no need to play out the scene completely. If more than half the companions fail their rolls, they are surprised and the Battle Hazard episode is lost, forcing the engagement mood to increase by one level. You should narrate the attack and its impact on the Free Peoples.

String of Warriors (Rearguard, Engines of War, Skirmishers)
The companions are caught in a flow of rushing enemies. They must eliminate a long and steady string of enemy warriors to complete this hazard. Each companion will face 1-2 enemies at a time until they kill the pre-determined total. The Battle Hazard episode is lost if they do not succeed, causing an immediate shift in relative strength of numbers in favor of the Shadow.

Repairs & Fortifications (Engines of War, On the Wall)
Under siege, the Free Peoples have experienced heavy damage to their walls, gates, and towers. They must desperately try to fortify their defences, repair the machines of war, or some other project before they are overrun by the Shadow. They must make three rolls of **Craft** (TN 14) to succeed. They do not have to make these in a row, but the Battle Hazard episode is lost if they fail a total of three attempts or if an is rolled at any time during the challenge, forcing the Threat level of the Shadow to increase by one level.

Blasting Fire (In Reserve, Rearguard, Engines of War)
Volleys of deadly catapult shot threaten to crush the heroes who must run or jump out of the way to avoid damage. Each hero must make 3 **Athletics** tests (TN 12) in a row or be reduced to zero Endurance. If they take damage, they receive an automatic Wound and must make a Protection test (TN 20) to keep from being killed outright — treating this the same as a deadly fall (see Loremaster's Book, p. 51). The Battle Hazard episode is lost if no player-heroes are left alive or conscious. If unchallenged, shift the relative strength of numbers one step in favor of the Shadow.

Certain Death (All areas of engagement)
The heroes must fight in an impossible situation that can very well lead to death. They must survive 5+ combat rounds against a heavy assault to complete the challenge. Every hero faces a maximum number of adversaries. To make matters worse, archers or spearmen can also fire upon them. If the heroes die — the Battle Hazard episode is lost and the Free Peoples will remember them in their songs and tales for years to come! If this hazard goes unchallenged, increase the engagement mood by one level as the ferocity of the war intensifies.

Player-hero Commanders

The forces of the Free Peoples are led by brave commanders often called Lords, High-kings, Kings, Heralds, High-captains, Captains, Chiefs, or Chieftains. Most of the time these are Loremaster characters, but if a player-hero has a high enough standing (4, 5, or 6), he might be called upon to lead his company into battle.

A player-hero commander not only gives the orders of deployment during the opening scene, but he also chooses which area of engagement he will take on the battlefield. This is very important for the following reasons:

First, a player-hero commander does not need to make Endurance tests during an assault wave due to the protection of his unit. Instead, he can make a single roll of **Inspire** at the beginning of every assault wave. A success means he has inspired the other player-heroes in the same area of engagement and lowers the difficulty of their Endurance tests by one level; a great or extraordinary success lowers the difficulty by two levels (to a minimum TN 10). This effect lasts for the current assault wave only.

Secondly, instead of rolling **Inspire**, a player-hero commander may make a single roll of **Awe** at the beginning of every assault wave to lower the threat level of the enemies in the same area of engagement, reducing the number of Endurance tests required of each player-hero stationed there. A success lowers it by one level, while a great or extraordinary success lowers it by two levels (the minimum level is *'weak'*). This effect lasts for the current assault wave only.

Finally, a player-hero commander can forget the first two choices and simply make the proper number of Endurance tests himself, signifying that he is not relying on the protection of his unit, but putting himself in danger along with them. If he chooses this option, he assists the other player-heroes in passing their Endurance tests. For every success the commander rolls (regardless of the degree), he grants one automatic success — good for one roll — to any other player-hero in the same area of engagement.

If more than one player-hero is commanding the Free Peoples in the same area of engagement, they can each choose a different option to gain the benefits of success for those activities. However, if two or more player-hero commanders choose **Inspire** or **Awe**, keep only the best result among them. Results from player-hero commanders making their own Endurance rolls stack.

> *Two of the companions are commanding the Free Peoples among the main assault. One of them chooses to fight side-by-side with his soldiers and make his own Endurance rolls this assault wave. The other chooses to **Inspire** the troops. The first one passes both of his Endurance tests granting automatic successes to two Endurance rolls among his companions. The other succeeds at **Inspire** with a great success and lowers the TN of all Endurance tests — this assault wave — by two levels, for all companions in the area.*

4. Heroic Actions

Once all Endurance tests are complete (along with any Protection tests and Battle Hazard sequences) and the player-heroes are still alive and conscious, they should be given an opportunity to use their Common skills to perform actions on the battlefield. This affords a good opportunity to earn Advancement points and to make a difference in the tale.

During an average assault wave, players are entitled to perform at least one heroic action, but it is up to you to decide how many to allow. Encourage them to use creativity when choosing their skills and actions. The scenes of their successes and failures provide the highlights of the assault wave.

> *A hero is Wounded and has fallen unconscious in the middle of the fray. You allow one of his companions to make an **Athletics** roll to pull him to safety and then a **Healing** roll to treat his Wound.*

Fear & Corruption Tests

'There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.'

The Shadow grows stronger in numbers while the Free Peoples of Middle-earth remain largely unaware. With each passing day, the odds increase against the world of Men. Sauron's plan of domination slowly unfolds and the Free Peoples find themselves outnumbered and overwhelmed by their enemies. They must cling to hope and persevere through the darkness, for the Will of the West shall prevail and all will not be lost.

Perseverance is the virtue that allows heroes to keep pressing on even when they would rather surrender, escape, hide, or brood over their failures. In Middle-earth, perseverance is tied closely to valour and wisdom. Therefore, in the game, the Free Peoples demonstrate perseverance through successful **Fear** tests and **Corruption** tests. Within the context of a battle or siege, any hero that fails one of these tests showing the "eye", also flees the battlefield.

Corruption Tests

The core rules call for **Corruption** tests when the companions face something that could taint their spirit (LB, 28). These situations include moments of anguish, lingering in a blighted place, committing a misdeed, or even taking possession of a cursed item (LB, 56-58). The Special ability, *Dreadful Spells*, can also force companions to make **Corruption** tests (LB, 66). It will be up to your imagination to weave these elements into the story, especially when operating in narrative time. Step 4: Heroic Actions provides the ideal spot to include scenes of corruption.

One of the player-heroes suffers a killing blow when making his Endurance rolls. You narrate that a swift Orc arrow suddenly buries itself in his neck. He slowly drops his sword, falls to his knees, and grabs at the black-feathered shaft, hesitating to pull it out. He tries to speak his final words, but he chokes on his own blood, slumping lifelessly to the side. Everyone looks away in anguish. You call for the remaining player-heroes to each make a ***Corruption*** *test (TN 12) to keep from gaining a Shadow point.*

Fear Tests

Fear tests are normally triggered during an episode by a Special ability that a Shadow creature possesses (namely the *Strike Fear* and *Thing of Terror* abilities). In narrative time, you may want to expand and redefine how these abilities operate, but you may also want to expand the triggers for a **Fear** test to include facing overwhelming numbers of Shadow and extremely bad conditions.

During the current assault wave, the heroes roll a second 'Shattered Shields' result in a row, forcing the relative strength of numbers to shift to "The Shadow significantly ***outnumbers*** *the Free Peoples." You narrate the scene. The companions stand ready at the main gate with their spears pointed toward whatever may come through the doors. A few moments later, a giant battering ram crashes through, followed by four massive trolls and a swarm of goblins. You require each player-hero to make a* ***Fear*** *test (TN 14) or lose their ability to invoke an Attribute bonus on any Endurance tests that assault wave.*

5. End of Battle

After the heroes have resolved their heroic actions, you will determine if the conflict has come to an end. Here are a couple of default indicators that a battle or siege has concluded (see also 'The Rule of Two' sidebar):

- The relative strength of numbers statement has shifted up to "The Shadow has Prevailed" or down to "The Free Peoples are Victorious!" This is a decisive victory for the winning side.
- One side has chosen to take their losses and retreat (see 'Retreat' below).

When either of these conditions are present, you are ready to narrate the end of the battle or move into an optional **Last Stand** episode in which the player-heroes have a chance to improve their results.

If none of these conditions are present, repeat Steps 1 to 5 until the war does come to an end.

Retreat

After several assault waves, it is possible that the player-heroes will have lost a dangerous amount of Endurance points or they will have suffered a Wound or even died. Personal retreat may be an option to avoid further harm. In addition, if at least one of the companions is a commander, he can order all of the Free Peoples to fall back, retreating to safety. Retreating in narrative time requires no dice rolling; it automatically succeeds. However, added danger can come through an optional **Last Stand** episode.

Depending on the circumstances of your story, the Shadow may retreat under any conditions that you decide. Your considerations can include factors such as the actual sizes of the forces remaining (as interpreted by you), the number of assault waves that have already taken place, or the current relative strength of numbers. These factors reflect the Shadow's morale, endurance, and even strategy during the war, which are all part of your narration.

The Rule of Two

In addition to one side reaching victory through relative strength of numbers or the retreat of their enemies, you may optionally declare the following conditions for victory:

- The Free Peoples have routed the Shadow when a total of two icons have been rolled on the **Assault Wave table.**
- The Shadow have defeated the Free Peoples when a total of two icons have been rolled on the **Assault Wave table.**

When the battle or siege ends in one of these ways, it should be treated essentially like a retreat scenario, but you are also encouraged to find a 'magical' reason for the sudden break in fighting.

To Stand or Not to Stand?

The condition of the player-heroes, at the conclusion of a battle or siege, will largely determine whether or not they are ready for a **Last Stand** episode. If they have suffered too much Endurance loss, they risk unconsciousness or death and a **Last Stand** episode may not be the wisest choice. Instead, they may accept the results of the battle as is and choose to narrate their escape or their satisfaction in watching the Shadow remnants flee. If you feel that it enhances the narrative, you can decide to run a **Last Stand** episode regardless of the players' decision, but be warned — you might not be popular, depending on the results. On the other hand — it could turn out to be an epic finish and your decision will be heralded!

Optional Last Stand Episode

You and the players must decide whether or not to play a **Last Stand** episode at the conclusion of the battle or siege. Bearing in mind that the **Battle & Siege Resolution Rules** were created for narrative time mode, this is completely optional, as the final scene would need to be played using the regular combat rules in episode mode. You may think of this as the first episode at the end of a long journey; the Endurance of the player-heroes has been tested and the impact of their rolls have taken their toll. Now, a final scene of combat can either improve the success of the Free Peoples or worsen the damage on the player-heroes.

The recommended conditions for a **Last Stand** episode are listed on the **Last Stand table** below according to whatever the final result on the **Assault Wave table** was during the current assault wave. Most often, the last roll will be *Drums of Doom* or *Will of the West* because those results automatically shift the relative strength of numbers up or down and can be used as triggers to end the battle. However, if one side retreats, any result is likely to have been rolled last on the **Assault Wave table**.

On the table, you will find simple descriptions to guide you in crafting a **Last Stand** scene, but if you require even more advisement, we make the following suggestions based on the conditions statements listed:

- ***Worst possible conditions*** are where the heroes are outnumbered 8 to 1 or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 25-32 per player-hero.
- ***Horrid conditions*** are where the heroes are outnumbered 6 to 1 or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 17-24 per player-hero.
- ***Bad conditions*** are where the heroes are outnumbered 4 to 1 or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 9-16 per player-hero.
- ***Fair conditions*** are where the heroes are outnumbered 2 to 1 or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 5-8 per player-hero.
- ***Good conditions*** are where the heroes are evenly matched or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 2-4 per player-hero.

Last Stand Table:

Final Result on the Assault Wave Table	Suggested conditions for a Last Stand episode...
Drums of Doom	Enter a **Last Stand** episode under the ***worst possible conditions***.
Shattered Shields	Enter a **Last Stand** episode under ***horrid conditions***.
The Line is Held	Enter a **Last Stand** episode under ***bad conditions***.
Night is Ending	Enter a **Last Stand** episode under ***fair conditions***.
Will of the west	Enter a **Last Stand** episode under ***good conditions***.

Three player-heroes have joined the Free Peoples in an intense siege against an Orc infested stronghold. They have managed to survive two assault waves when one of the players rolls an ᛟ *on the **Assault Wave table**, shifting the relative strength of numbers from "Both sides are near enough **evenly sized**," to "The Free Peoples are **overwhelmed in numbers** by the Shadow." This automatically forces every player-hero to apply double Damage on any failed Endurance tests they make this assault wave. After making those rolls and performing heroic actions, they consider falling back from the siege to spare any more lives. However, on their way out of the Orc stronghold, they would like to strike*

*one final blow to improve their results. They will need to enter a **Last Stand** episode under **worst possible conditions**, meaning they will face up to eight enemies (Attribute level 4) each! If they are victorious, you allow them to complete their objective in dramatic fashion during their escape. In this case, they topple a tower, killing a very important commander in the process.*

Awards & Honours

And there were brought before him many to receive his praise and reward for their valour[.]

In the aftermath of a battle or siege, the Free Peoples may celebrate their victory with a feast or a ceremony. During this time, the heroes who performed valiantly can be recognized and given awards for their courage. Celebrations are not always in order, but when they are, the awards are usually in the form of Treasure. You may choose to increase their Standing and award them with an additional Experience point as well, if you feel they deserve it.

Awarding Treasure

A great way for the Free Peoples to honour their heroes is to award them with gifts of Treasure. The amount of Treasure that can be awarded will vary based on the resources of the awarding culture and the tale being told. You can decide on the specific amounts any way you would like. For those wanting a more definitive guideline for awarding Treasure, we offer the following suggestions:

Begin by recording every instance a player rolls a ᚠ on an Endurance test, during a Battle Hazard episode, during a Heroic action, and during a Last Stand episode. In addition, write down whether he rolled any ᚷs along with each success and the area of engagement where he was deployed. Every ᚠ represents a notable accomplishment or an act of valour performed by the hero on the battlefield. A great or extraordinary success indicates an even more courageous deed. The higher the TN — as determined by the area of engagement — the greater the valiance. Therefore, the highest honour any hero can earn, in this way, is accomplished by rolling: ᚠ, ᚷ, ᚷ while *Amidst the Vanguard* in a battle or *The Main Assault* during a siege.

Then, award 1 point of Treasure per ᚠ rolled, 2 points of Treasure per ᚠ + ᚷ, and 3 points of Treasure per ᚠ + ᚷ + ᚷ. If the TN for any roll was higher than 14, increase the award by 1 Treasure point per level of increase.

A hero is stationed 'Amidst the Vanguard' (TN 18) and rolls a ᚠ + ᚷ + ᚷ on an Endurance test. This indicates a highly valourous act and will earn him 5 Treasure points if he can survive the battle!

Increasing Standing

Normally, player-heroes must spend Treasure points during an undertaking to Raise Standing among their people. Battles and sieges can provide them the opportunity to raise their Standing without spending Treasure, simply because they are risking their lives to protect their culture and the peace of Middle-earth.

You may decide if a hero has performed valiantly enough to earn the honour of an increase in Standing. But if you would rather have a guideline, add up the amount of Treasure a hero earns during an engagement. If the amount he earns is equal to his current Standing or higher, then he can increase his Standing by one point.

Additional Experience Point

The rules in the Loremaster's Book, page 17, give instructions for awarding Experience points after each session of play, as well as at the conclusion of an Adventuring phase. If winning a battle or siege is part of the Company objective, you may use it as the reason to award players an **additional Experience point** at the end of a session. If they do very well, performing acts of valour, you should also feel free to award them a **supplemental Experience point** at the conclusion of the Adventuring phase.

Part 3: -episode mode-

'Twenty-one!' cried Gimli. He hewed a two-handed stroke and laid the last Orc before his feet. 'Now my count passes Master Legolas again.'

Combat is one of the most enjoyable activities of *The One Ring* — from a player's point of view — especially because of the unique rules that govern it, such as the rules for combat advantages, initiative, combat stances, combat tasks, and Shadow special abilities. The core rules are written to function mainly in the episode mode of storytelling, where the action is close-up and personal and follows the heroes blow-by-blow. However, action can temporarily slip into narrative time mode, usually through player-hero intervention or special events of your choosing, but it quickly returns back to episode mode as the default method of combat resolution.

While the core rulebooks provide all the necessary guidelines for conducting many types of combat in Middle-earth, they do not specifically instruct Loremasters how to handle large battles or sieges in episode mode. Instead, published adventures have dealt with this matter as scenarios have come up. Therefore, one of our goals — for this portion of the guide — is to bridge the gap between the combat rules and how to apply them to large battles and sieges, as seen in official supplements.

Battle Models

One of the easiest ways for you to create your own mythic battles is to begin with an analysis of the battles already published. By doing a little research, you will discover some new tools, not previously revealed in the core rulebooks, that are meant to help you deal with large engagements, while keeping the story of the player-heroes in the foreground and the fate of their allies in the background or 'off-screen.'

WARNING: Players, you may want to skip the rest of this part, for it contains summaries of important battles that your Loremaster may present in the future.

Below, you will find summaries of six different battles taken from official material. Each of these summaries includes an analysis and a step-by-step guide to using the battle as a model in your own adventures. This is meant to save you precious time and energy during the creative process and hopefully inspire some innovative ideas of your own.

1 - The Battle of Woodland Hall

Found in the free adventure *Words of the Wise*, **The Battle of Woodland Hall** takes up the entire final part. Conflict is looming as a large Orc warband is approaching the settlement. The company is called upon to assist in the planning and preparing of the defences.

Summary, pages 10-11, Words of the Wise:

- Characters are encouraged to participate in the organisation of the defences by using **Battle**, **Inspire** or **Awe**. They can earn 1-3 bonus Success dice, as Combat advantages, for "clever defensive ploys" (the Loremaster decides).
- The main section of the battle is called "The Assault" and begins with the heroes making an **Awareness** roll to notice they have been outflanked.
- Then, they participate in **The Fight for the Gate** (the only location the heroes will fight at during the entire battle). Instructions are given about how many enemies to use per hero and how to use them.
- By rolling the eye, a new enemy is added to the battle at the end of a round until a certain number of enemies has been reached.
- A list of 6 special effects is given for **The Magic of Radagast**. One of these effects is triggered every time a Gandalf rune icon is rolled by either side. The exact triggered effect can be chosen or a Success die can

randomly determine which one to use. At least half of them affect the game in real ways, such as an enemy is eliminated or a point of **Hope** is gained; the others are simply wondrous.

- The battle ends when Radagast arrives with the sudden break of day; this happens when all enemies have been defeated or three ᚠ icons have been rolled.

- A section called "Aftermath" finishes things up, describing the heroes' fame and a victory celebration.

Analysis for Creating Your Own Mythic Battles:

This battle structure requires medium effort to duplicate, providing plenty of creative opportunity for Loremasters who wish to use it.

The heroes are kept in the same general location the entire battle with a pre-determined number of enemies to face. The 👁 serves as a simple trigger for adding new enemies during the fight, providing the feeling of being in a large battle with waves of opponents. Positive events outside the player-heroes' control unfold through rolling a ᚠ; mainly their foes are destroyed and the end of the battle comes.

By following the structure of **The Battle of Woodland Hall**, you can create your own mythic battle from beginning to end. Just follow the step-by-step instructions below and customise it to fit your own scenario.

Step-by-step:

1. Name the overall battle accordingly (this will serve as the title of an entire part of an adventure); describe the events that lead up to the battle.

2. In the introduction, offer players extra bonus Success dice, as Combat advantages, if they have time to make preparations by using skills such as **Battle**, **Craft**, **Inspire**, or **Awe**.

3. Begin a section for the actual battle and give it a title specific to the location in which it will be fought. Heroes will spend their entire time fighting in this area of the battlefield. Describe how many enemies each hero should face and any tactics they may employ.

4. Create a **negative event** that will be triggered every time the 👁 is rolled. This can be as simple as a new enemy arrives until a certain number of them has been reached.

5. Create a list of random **positive events**, one of which is triggered every time a ᚠ is rolled. At least half of these events should have real game effects, such as an enemy is defeated or a point of **Hope** is gained. The others should add flavour to your storytelling (see page 11 of *Words of the Wise* for ideas).

6. A condition should be given for victory, such as when all enemies of a certain type have been killed, or so many ᚠ icons have been rolled.

7. Write a section similar to "Aftermath" that describes the results of the battle and any victory celebrations.

2 - The Battle at the Ringfort

Being the first large battle in *Tales from Wilderland*, in the adventure *Of Leaves and Stewed Hobbit*, **The Battle at the Ringfort** makes up the third part of the adventure. It is night and the heroes and five allies are holed up in a ring-shaped earthen bank around a hilltop. They are waiting for an Orc attack and hoping to last through the night so that they can make their escape down the mountainside the next morning.

Summary, pages 30-34, Tales from Wilderland:

- The first section is called "The Ringfort" which describes the battlefield. Since there are limited approaches to the ringfort, the heroes gain a free **Attribute bonus (Heart)** on **Battle** rolls made to determine Combat advantages.

A Longer War

Although **The Battle of Woodland Hall** is complete with just one challenge — **The Fight for the Gate** — you could use it as a model for putting a string of challenges together when creating a longer war. Each new challenge would only be reached if the victory conditions were met in the previous one. In this case, it is recommended that you draw a schematic of the entire battle, showing the 'route' of the companions as they progress toward a finale. Each challenge would be numbered, detailed, and contain its own unique list of triggered events.

If multiple routes are possible on the battlefield, you may give players the ability to choose where they would like to go next. This makes a map of the battlefield very important as they will only be able to choose adjacent challenge locations — unless of course they are riding eagles or using magic of some sort! The sequence of choices may affect the outcome of the battle in some way. You are encouraged to think of delicious consequences for not getting the right combination...

- A successful **Search** roll allows any companion to discover a secret passageway that can be used to sneak in and out of during the battle (both heroes and enemies).

- The second section is called "The Caravan" and describes the companions' allies, along with everyone's plight and the tactics that will be employed. A successful roll of **Battle** lets the heroes know that the plan is good and also reveals to them other tactical information, such as where to place guards, etc.

- The third section is called "The Enemy." Heroes are given the option to make a **Hunting** roll to get a rough count on how many enemies there are. They can also use the **Keen-eyed** trait to assist them in this. Numbers and types of enemies are listed per companion. When the last Orc is slain, the Goblins will flee the battle.

- A challenge from the Orc leader scares one ally to possibly surrender. Heroes can use **Inspire** to rally his spirit, or **Awe** to challenge the enemy back, or they can just start firing arrows!

- The planned tactics of the Goblins are described.

- The fourth section is entitled "Battle!" and lists exactly what enemies attack in the first wave and beyond. As usual, these numbers are based per companion.

- The battle is run normally with one addition: At the beginning of every round, after the heroes have chosen combat stances, the Loremaster should roll the Feat die to determine how the allies are doing. The results are listed on an **Allies in Battle table**. Rolling the 👁 means an ally is slain, while rolling a 🏹 means an Orc has lost his head! Numbers **1, 2, 3, or 4** yield specific negative consequences, while **5, 6, or 7** means the allies keep fighting, and **8, 9, and 10** give positive effects, that if rolled twice in a row, one of the Orcs is slain.

- Next, four different **Battle Events** are given for the Loremaster to apply at appropriate moments in the battle. Each one of them lists a triggering circumstance, e.g. **Goblin Skirmishers** allows the Loremaster to send in two Goblin archers per companion if she just wants to make things harder or if the heroes didn't secure the secret passage (they would only know about this if they made their **Search** roll in the beginning of the battle or if they made their **Battle** roll to confirm the plans of their allies). The Goblin archers can either attack the companions from behind or run around causing problems, like kicking over the bonfire and plunging the ringfort into darkness, etc.

- Victory comes when the Orc captain is slain.

Analysis for Creating Your Own Mythic Battles:

More complex than **The Battle for Woodmen Hall**, this model requires greater effort on the part of the Loremaster, who must provide detailed tactical information and **Battle Events** based on the location, enemy, and choices of the player-heroes.

Once again, the companions are basically fixed in a single location throughout the battle; their allies are fighting from other spots in the ringfort. How the player-heroes fare in battle is entirely up to their performance each round, while a Feat die roll controls the allies' destiny.

Here are some suggestions for using **The Battle at the Ringfort** as a model.

Step-by-step:

1. When preparing to write the battle, divide it into four sections: The Location, The Allies, The Enemy, and Battle.

2. Under "The Location," describe any unique features of the area that can possibly give a free **Attribute bonus (Heart)** to a **Battle** roll when determining Combat advantages. Explain any secrets of the location that can be discovered through a **Search** roll.

3. In "The Allies" section, write down any planned tactics that will be used when fighting the enemy. A simple roll of **Battle** will give the companions information that will positively benefit them when certain **Battle Events** are triggered, e.g. the heroes could learn that an outer door to a fortress is weak and that they should reinforce it. Later, a **Battle Event** sees a Troll trying to bash down the door. If the heroes reinforced it, it will take the Troll a couple of rounds longer, giving them a chance to make ranged attacks against it.

4. Next, create "The Enemy" section by first determining how many and what types of enemies the companions will face. Heroes can get a rough count of their enemies by making a successful **Hunting** roll or by possessing a Trait like **Keen-eyed**. At this point, you should add any pre-battle challenges that you wish. Challenges should test the skills of the companions in some way. Lastly, write out the general tactics of the enemy along with any special plans they might have.

5. Begin writing the "Battle!" section by describing the anticipated waves of enemies that the heroes will face, e.g. during the first round, three Orc Soldiers will rush each companion, followed by another if any are slain. By round three, a pack of five Wargs (Wild Wolves) will join the battle and relieve the Orc Soldiers where possible, who fall back to make ranged attacks with their spears. If all the Wargs are slain, the Orcs will retreat.

6. In the same section, state that a roll of the Feat die will take place at the top of every round after combat stances have been chosen. The result will be checked on an **Allies in Battle table** to decide how well the allies are doing. You will need to create this table following the same pattern in **The Battle at the Ringfort** (see page 34 of *Tales from Wilderland* for ideas).

7. Write out an appropriate amount of **Battle Events** (three or four is good) and the circumstances that trigger them. This is a chance for you as the Loremaster to make the battle memorable.

8. Make sure to state the conditions for victory.

3 - Battle of the Outlaws

The **Battle of the Outlaws** is found in the third adventure of *Tales from Wilderland* called *Kinstrife & Dark Tidings*. It is really an alternate name, as the book gives three possible battle names, depending on the actual location of the fighting, which is determined by the status of one Loremaster character named Oderic. It could be **The Battle at Stonyford**, **The Battle at the Old Ford**, or **The Battle at Gloomy Fold**. Regardless of the location, the company joins a fighting force of Beorning warriors to face a band of outlaws.

Combining Models

After analysing several battle structures, you may decide that you want to use a couple of them when crafting your own war. You can do this by simply connecting them together, one after the other. Or, if you like bits and pieces of the models, you can cannibalise them to create your own battle structures.

An example of cannibalising would be to use the 👁 trigger from **The Battle of Woodland Hall** (which adds an enemy to the fight every time a companion rolls an 👁) combined with the **Allies in Battle table** from **The Battle at the Ringfort** (which determines randomly the fate of the allies at the top of every combat round).

Summary, pages 61-63, Tales from Wilderland:

- First, the company reaches the House of Beorn. This experience is narrated along with the gathering of the Beorning warriors. Then, various scenarios are sketched for the fate of Oderic in the upcoming battle.

- The battle will either be fought in the ruins of Stonyford, the banks of the Anduin, or a steep-sided, stony valley called the Gloomy Fold. The exact location will affect the combined **Hate** possessed by the enemies engaged with the companions, as well as the TN needed to determine Combat advantages.

- It is stated that every two player-heroes will need to defeat two Outlaw Warriors and one Outlaw Archer before they can break through the front lines and face the outlaw captain: Valter the Bloody. With him may also be Oderic (if he sided with the bandits).

- Any player wishing to use *Escape Combat* must succeed at it twice to leave the fray, due to the number of combatants.

- At a key moment in the battle, just as the outlaws are about to rally, the Beornings call for Beorn. Players can join in and break the rules for *Intimidate Foe*, using it even if they are not in Forward Stance. Beorn shows up and the remaining outlaws surrender or are killed and the battle ends.

- A section outlining the fate of some of the combatants is given.

Analysis for Creating Your Own Mythic Battles:

This model is a very basic and directed model to use. There are no die result triggers and no tables. Even though the battle is described as a "swirling melee," the companions only face a limited number of foes before breaking through the front lines to face the leaders. The rest of the Beorning warriors are assumed to be doing as well as the player-heroes and if it looks like the company is headed for trouble at any time, Beorn shows up and saves the day. However, if this happens before they break through the front lines, Valter will get away and flee into the wilderness.

If you are concentrated on telling a story and want a very easy structure to follow, you can use **Battle of Outlaws** as a model, especially when it's important that the heroes survive. Here are some suggestions for doing so.

Step-by-step:

1. Begin by creating three sections: one to describe the gathering of allies and the possible battlegrounds; one for the battle itself; and one for what happens after the battle.

2. In the first section, you should tell the story of how the allies meet and what unique characters are involved, what they will do, and why. It may be that the player-heroes' previous actions have determined these facts. Their actions may also have clinched where the battleground is located. Each possible location and how the characters can arrive there ought to be detailed.

3. In the next section, begin by listing the possible locations of the battle and assign each of them a **Hate** score that represents a combined total possessed by the foes who will fight the companions. Then, designate a TN for each location that will be used for **Battle** rolls made for determining Combat advantages. The **Hate** score should reflect the morale or energy level of the enemy in that particular location. The TN emulates the potential for tactics, e.g. a plain or less familiar battlefield will offer less of a chance for advantages and will have a higher TN.

4. In the same section, state how many and which types of enemies each companion will face on the front lines. Then explain how they can engage enemy leaders.

5. If you desire a *eucatastrophe* (a Tolkien expression for a sudden, joyous turn), write out exactly how the Free Peoples are saved and how the battle ends.

6. For the third section, tell about the fate of important figures in the battle.

4 - The Battle of the Hilltop

In part three of the *Those Who Tarry No Longer*, the fourth adventure in *Tales from Wilderland*, a grand battle takes place called **The Battle of the Hilltop**. The heroes have been fleeing an Orc warband and have come to the foothills of the Misty Mountains not far from the High Pass. They are forced to make a last stand as Orcs close in from all directions. They have come to capture the "elf-woman," Lady Irimë, whom the company is escorting to Rivendell.

Summary, pages 70-72, Tales from Wilderland:

- With no escape, the player-heroes must find a defensible spot by making a **Battle** roll. Then, they decide how to prepare for combat by rolling **Battle** to survey the land or **Explore** to find large boulders to roll onto the Orcs, etc.

- The first major section, called "The Orcs Assemble," describes the tactics of the Orcs, who are just out of range for bow attacks. Because there are so many of them, the heroes are required to make a **Fear** test or suffer the penalty of not being able to invoke an Attribute bonus for the rest of the fight.

- As an Orc-captain shouts out a challenge to the company, they are given an option to challenge him back. They can do this by using the **Awe** or **Battle** skill to intimidate the Orcs, which will work just like the *Intimidate Foe* special combat task.

- The assault begins with Orcs charging up the hill. Irimë raises her hand as an elf-light blazes from the gem in her ring. This dismays the Orcs and lets any companion that failed the **Fear** test earlier roll again.

- The second section is called "The Battle of the Hilltop." Several pieces of gaming information are given. First, the elf-light gives the heroes initiative and two bonus Success dice each as Combat advantages (no need to roll). Second, the number and kind of Orcs that each hero will face is determined by the chosen stance of each hero. Every time an Orc falls, one will take its place.

- Thirdly, several episodes are given for the Loremaster to develop over the course of the battle. These events present challenges that the heroes will need to deal with, perhaps provoking non-combat actions. For example, heroes will need to handle three Uruks that have formed a shield-wall creating a wedge between the companions and keeping them from fighting side by side. Players will need to come up with ideas that disrupt this scheme.

- The assault lasts for at least six rounds or until two members of the company are Wounded or reduced to zero Endurance.

- A third section called "The Eagles," tells the story of how the heroes are suddenly flown away in the talons of giant birds, so ending the battle.

Analysis for Creating Your Own Mythic Battles:

If you need a combat that involves an overwhelming number of enemies, but only lasts a short while, **The Battle of the Hilltop** is a good model to look at. However, it will still require a fair amount of preparation.

Unlike the other models thus far, this battle involves no allies fighting alongside the company (save for Irimë and the Great Eagles who come to rescue them in the end). As a result, it feels like an ordinary combat in many ways. It is up to you to lift it into a larger mythical realm. Following the process below will assist you in this task.

One other note: this model, again, includes a *eucatastrophe*, but this does not automatically exclude the company from danger. Conditions are given for when the allies come to the rescue, but as usual, the heroes remain vulnerable to a killing blow. To get the most out of this model, your descriptions should heighten that sense of danger.

Step-by-step:

1. As an introduction, allow the players to make rolls of **Battle** and **Explore** to find the best spot to defend themselves (perhaps giving Combat advantages) and to gain materials that can later be used against their opponents in some way.

2. Next, divide the battle into three major parts and name them accordingly. The first part should describe the enemies' tactics; the second part should provide all the important rules and facts of the battle; and the third part should describe the saviors of the battle and how it all ends.

3. For the first part, decide if the enemy begins just out of range for bow attacks or if there will be time for ranged volleys before close combat is reached.

4. Since there will be an overwhelming number of enemies attacking the heroes, you should require them to each make a **Fear** test. If they fail to pass, they will be prevented from invoking Attribute bonuses for the length of the fight.

5. At this point, if there are any story elements you would like to add, you should do so. Following the model, you could have an enemy captain shout out threats and give the heroes a chance to use the *Intimidate Foe* special task to return the favor. Perhaps one of the allies displays power in some way. You could allow for a re-roll on any previously failed **Fear** test.

6. In the second part, begin by writing any further effects that the display of power has, e.g. it can automatically grant initiative to the heroes and give them a couple of bonus Success dice as Combat advantages.

7. The chosen stance of each companion will determine how many enemies and what type of enemy they will face. You need to write these details down.

8. Specify that every time an enemy is slain, another takes its place.

9. Craft several episodes to take place over the course of the battle. Be creative and use these events to add flavor to the story and a challenge to your players.

10. Decide how many rounds and what conditions trigger the end of the fight, e.g. the assault lasts for at least six rounds or until two members of the company are Wounded or reduced to zero Endurance.

11. The third part is all about the rescue and is entirely up to your imagination. There are no die rolls necessary, but by allowing the circumstances and facts to dictate the narrative, you give the players a sense that it has been their choices that have brought them thus far and not simply your storytelling initiative. For example, a simple statement such as "The wounded are rescued first" or "The rescuers give special treatment to the hero with the most Endurance remaining" lets players know that things could have turned out differently.

Simplifying Models

Any model can be simplified if you eliminate certain elements. Take **The Battle of the Hilltop** for instance: by removing the entire third part, you eliminate the sudden rescue by the allies. Granted, this makes the battle much more deadly, as the heroes are outnumbered twenty to one, but it can also be more rewarding for those who survive the battle to tell the tale.

Opportunities to destroy several enemies all at once could be included in the events, e.g. during preparations, if the heroes found and manoeuvred large boulders to roll down the hill, then at a specified point, you could allow a roll of **Battle** or **Athletics** to wipe out an amount of them based on the level of success.

5 - Siege of the Inn

Looking down from the upper level of an alehouse called *The Falling Goat*, the companions witness the return of the Alderman of Haycombe (one of the largest settlements in Wilderland). With his wagon are his guards and a large number of Easterling warriors. After announcing his lordship over the people, the Easterlings and undead guards begin to attack the crowd. **The Siege of the Inn** begins when the undead warriors stumble toward the house to attack its occupants. So begins a dream sequence that takes the player-heroes five hundred years back in time, in the fifth part of *Those Who Tarry No Longer*, the fourth adventure in *Tales from Wilderland*.

Summary, pages 77-78, Tales from Wilderland:

- The companions are inside the inn when a commotion can be heard outside. Because the crowd is too thick to wade through, they can decide to go to the upper level to see what is happening. They witness "The Return of the Alderman," which is also the title of the section. The Alderman is accompanied by some undead guards and a large group of Easterling warriors.
- Each player-hero makes an **Awareness** roll to gain clues to the disaster that is about to strike. Each level of success allows them more detailed leads about the enemies they are about to face.
- The "Siege of the Inn" section begins when the Easterling warriors and the undead guards strike out at the crowd. The Loremaster narrates these events without any dice rolling.
- In the meantime, the heroes are given the option to barricade themselves in the inn. If they do, they automatically gain two Success dice without needing to make a **Battle** roll.
- The first wave of battle includes two undead warriors per companion. Once they are killed, the Easterlings join the fray. If some of them are defeated, they light the inn on fire and no victory is possible; the player-heroes either surrender or burn to death.

Analysis for Creating Your Own Mythic Battles:

Of all the battles modeled in *Tales from Wilderland*, this "siege" is by far the easiest to duplicate and prepare for. There are only two sections presented: one for describing the onset of combat and one to give the number of enemies each companion will face and the conditions that end the siege. There are no special tables to consider, tactics, or events to create. By requiring very minimal dice rolling, a complete focus on the player-heroes, and forcing a quick loss, this model begs for emphasis on storytelling.

You could conceivably use **The Siege of the Inn** as a default model for all your large battles and sieges, even if you don't want them to end in a loss for the Free Peoples. Just change the outcome to fit your scenario.

Step-by-step:

1. Begin by setting up a section that describes the onset of battle. Where are the player-heroes? Who is with them? What are they all doing? Who are the enemies and how are they approaching?

2. Allow the player-heroes a roll of **Awareness** to notice details about the enemy that may prepare them better for the upcoming conflict or brace them mentally. Write down the kinds of clues revealed for each level of success they roll.

3. Write out an option for the player-heroes to reinforce their position in some way. This will grant each of them one or two bonus Success dice automatically, without the need to make a **Battle** roll.

4. Start a section to begin the fighting. The onset should include narration of the enemies' actions, without any need for dice rolling.

5. Describe the first wave of attackers and how many of them each player-hero will face.

6. Describe any further assault waves and the conditions for ending the battle or siege.

6 - The Battle of Celduin

The howling of wolves grows louder and louder as the company braces themselves for an expected Orc assault on Celduin. By request of King Bard, the player-heroes have travelled south from Dale, mustering allies from the countryside to join them in holding the crossings of the River Running against the enemy. Parts six, seven, and eight of *The Crossings of Celduin*, the sixth adventure in *Tales from Wilderland*, tell the tale of **The Battle of Celduin**, which consists of three assault waves, culminating in a fight against the Gibbet King, the torturer and jailer of the Necromancer of Dol Guldur.

Summary, pages 129-135, Tales from Wilderland:

- The companions are allowed to study the battleground and prepare the defences. They are given several tasks to consider, such as repairing a tollgate, training combatants, sending out explorers, and possibly collapsing a bridge. Each successful activity grants bonus Success dice to be used during the battle. These are in addition to the normal bonus dice received when checking for Combat advantages during the Onset of battle.

- While the enemy is approaching, the heroes can choose where they make their stand: on the bridge, in the tollhouse (ground floor, upper floor, or roof), the banks of the Celduin, or the town. Each location is described, having advantages or possible pitfalls.

- In a sidebar, Loremasters are encouraged to reward players for good ideas in preparing defences or taking up strategic positions with tangible, "in-game" rewards, such as extra ranged volleys, a greater defensive TN, or Damage inflicted on the enemy.

- The first assault, called "Orcs and Wargs," begins by providing narrative of how a host of Orcs and Wargs scrambles toward the bridge. Their leader is a big Orc-chieftain who threatens the Free Peoples if they don't open the gates. The enemy charges over the bridge and some of them start scaling the tollhouse in order to gain access and open the portcullis and gates themselves.

- The number of enemies is stated, along with how many rounds it will take to complete their tactics. Also, further tactics are given depending on their previous results.

- Conditions are given for when the enemy will flee or is killed by other defenders in the village. When this happens, the player-heroes can use the time to heal and do other activities before a new wave of enemies is upon them.

- Four hours later, the second assault, called "Hill-Troll," presents a deadly situation when a Hill-Troll from Mordor, accompanied by Goblin Archers

attacks the tollhouse. The companions are required to make a Fear test.

- Instructions are given for how the Hill-Troll can break down the portcullis and what tactics it uses in doing so. If it is successful, the goblins will swarm the bridge and enter the town.

- While the Hill-Troll is pounding, the goblins stay across the river shooting arrows of fire and poison. If the Hill-Troll is killed, they flee the battlefield.

- In part eight of the adventure, "The Last Day," night has passed and dawn has come. The strength of the enemy's numbers has grown and the player-heroes must assess their situation during the day before a final assault that night. How they have personally fared is mirrored in the townsfolk and may impact their decision to stay and fight or flee. If they decide to flee the town, the consequences are discussed — the impact on Dale, the fate of Celduin, and Shadow points for the companions.

- Between assault waves, three events take place as part of the overall story, but also have affect on the final battle. First, a wounded warrior named Beoric is dying from a goblin-arrow. Then, a raven carrying a message from King Bard is shot down; the message says that help is on the way. Before dying, however, the raven gives them tactical advice to defeat the enemy. Finally, Beoric dies and the spirit of the Gibbet King speaks through his corpse trying to demoralise the player characters. Everyone must make a Corruption test or gain a Shadow point.

- Evening comes, and so does the final assault called "Orcs & Worse Things." An army of Orcs swarms across the river to attack. The company itself is outnumbered, but each companion will face one opponent each round, the type of enemy being determined by a roll of the Feat die. Any previous opponents disappear into "the chaotic mess of the melee..." There is no need to keep track of enemy Endurance, etc.; the next event will come if the heroes survive twelve rounds of combat or when two companions are wounded, knocked-out, or slain.

- The next event is the arrival of the Gibbet King on a wooden cart. The spirit attacks the companions with *Dreadful Spells* and its *Bewilder* special ability. While continuing to fight off the Orcs, the heroes are given three ways to defeat the Gibbet King: attack him directly, set the cart on fire, or push the cart into the Running River.

- If the heroes destroy the Gibbet King, the Orc host is scattered. If not, the Loremaster is given the option to intervene by sending outriders from Dale to hold them off, allowing the companions to escape and retreat.

- King Bard and the army of the North defeats the remaining Orc host just south of Dale and three possible outcomes are listed, depending on how long the companions held out in the battle of Celduin. The longer they were able to hold the Crossings of Celduin, the better the reward each of them receives in Treasure and bonus Experience points.

- In a section called "Aftermath," it is stated that the spirit of the Gibbet King has vanished and there is no time for a Fellowship Phase before the next adventure begins.

Analysis for Creating Your Own Mythic Battles:

If you want to use **The Battle of Celduin** as a model, it will require a large amount of work on your part, but it may also be an extremely rewarding exercise. The battle includes a preparation phase full of tactical options for your player-heroes to consider, three separate assault waves, and several events important to the story. Each companion may choose a starting location on the battleground, but may move around thereafter, according to the unfolding action. You will be responsible for creating multiple outcomes that are dependent on prior player choices and performance. This makes it the most demanding model out of the six presented in this document.

If you want to create an epic night of warfare gaming mixed with storytelling, then this model provides you with a good structure for that purpose. It does a great job at avoiding the humdrum that so often plagues combat in long gaming sessions.

This model also adds the idea of rewards in the form of Treasure and bonus Experience points.

Step-by-step:

1. Begin by laying out the situation and battleground for the companions. List three to four things they can possibly do to prepare the defences. Successful rolls in these activities should give them bonus Success dice that they will be able to use in addition to any bonus dice they gain during the Onset of combat when checking for combat advantages. You can call this section, "Preparations for Battle," or something similar.

2. Next, describe the advancement of the enemy. Then, give players multiple choices for where they should stand and fight during the opening of battle. Each location should have special information attached to it that can affect the player-heroes in some way.

3. You should list possible tangible rewards for good ideas when it comes to defences. These can include a higher or lower TN to hit the companions, additional ranged attacks, and automatic damage inflicted on the enemy, etc.

4. Name the first assault and describe how it will begin. How many enemies will there be and what types? What are their tactics? Is it possible for the companions to know more about them? Will there be any dialogue offered? Write the conditions for defeating that wave of enemies and how to move on. Will the companions have any healing time before the next assault wave?

5. Name the second assault appropriately. If the player-heroes will face a particularly frightening enemy, it might be wise to require a **Fear test** when they do. Again, describe the strength of numbers and tactics of the enemies the companions will fight against. Depending on your battleground, the Shadow will have goals for tearing through the defences. What conditions will need to be met for the enemy to accomplish its goals?

6. Write out what will happen between assault waves to advance the plot of the adventure. How did the companions fare in the previous assault? Does that have any affect? What can they do between assaults that will help them? Can they send out scouts to gather information, for example? Explain the fate of the allies and whether it is tied directly to the successes and failures of the player-heroes.

7. Write out options for retreat or surrender. How will these choices affect the overall battle?

8. Create several events that take place before the last assault. These events automatically happen and the player-heroes should be given opportunities to respond to them. Important information should be revealed through these narrations. Events are a good place to insert **Corruption tests**.

9. Name the final assault and tell about the numbers and types of enemies the companions will face during the opening attack. Will they know anything about their enemies?

10. Because of the overwhelming numbers of Shadow, there will be no need to keep track of enemy statistics in the heat of battle. Each round, every companion will face only one opponent of a certain type to be determined by a roll of the Feat die. These opponents change round by round. You will need to determine how many rounds the heroes must survive before triggering the big event.

11. Write out a special section to introduce the main event of the battle, which will be fighting a major enemy. Include every detail of how the event will unfold and the affect it will have on the companions and their allies. Again, this is a good place to include a **Corruption test**. Make sure to list several ways that the companions can defeat the enemy. Don't forget appropriate stat blocks for unique enemies. You might want to make it difficult for the player-heroes to attack the major enemy because of the other opponent they will be facing each round. Require them to first hit their minor enemy with a great or extraordinary success and then give them an immediate shot at the major enemy in the same round.

12. Describe how the rest of the host will flee if they can destroy their major enemy, but if they cannot, tell how fresh allies will arrive and route them (if your desire for an ending also includes victory).

13. If you want victory for the Free Peoples, you should write several paragraphs describing different qualities of victory they can achieve. This will depend on when the companions are defeated, if ever. Will they be defeated on the first night? The second? Or will they hold their ground for two nights? Obviously, the quicker they are defeated, the less quality of victory they will achieve. In addition, describe the rewards they will receive in points of Treasure and bonus Experience points. You can give them anywhere from three to ten points of Treasure and one to three bonus Experience points.

14. Write a section called "Aftermath" to explain what happens after the battle.

Part 4:
-the appendices-

Appendix A:
Summary of a Mythic Battle

A good fairy-tale speaks to the lives of the players also. To accomplish this, you should...

- Present material that reminds everyone of the simple and humble things of life. Use humour to provoke memories of real-life situations.
- Give players hope and reason to believe they can make a difference in the tale, no matter how small and insignificant they think they are.
- Once-in-awhile, let the player-heroes experience consolation that leads to joy (a sudden rescue).

Appendix B:
Summary of the Battle & Siege Resolution Rules

1. Opening Scene

At the onset of battle and at the beginning of every assault wave, you should...

- Describe the relative strength of numbers between sides in the conflict. Use the **Relative Strength of Numbers Table** on p. 9 as a guide, remembering that in these dark times, the Shadow usually has the advantage.

- Assign the threat level of the Shadow forces based on their average Attribute level. Use the **Shadow Threat Table** on p. 10 to guide your decision. This will determine the number of Endurance tests each companion will make during an assault wave.

- Determine the engagement mood for the upcoming assault wave. Use the descriptions on the **Engagement Mood Table** on p. 10 to assist you or just roll a random Success die. This will determine how much Damage each companion takes for every failed Endurance test during the assault wave.

- Narrate the core tactics of the Free Peoples, such as command objectives and areas of engagement. Command objectives are a list of goals the heroes want to accomplish that include preparations, tactics, and outcomes. Use the **Areas of Engagement Table** on p. 11 to assign companions to specific locations on the battlefield. This will often determine the TN for Endurance tests during the assault wave.

2. Tides of War

To determine the overall success of the Free Peoples during the current assault wave, you should...

- Make a roll on the **Assault Wave Table** on p. 12. This roll affects the relative strength of numbers between the forces and modifies Damage taken during Step 3: Blood & Tears.

3. Blood & Tears

To calculate the affect of the engagement on individual companions, you should...

- Have each companion make a number of **Endurance** tests at TN 14 (or use the appropriate TN from the **Areas of Engagement Table** on p. 11). **Endurance** tests use the **Battle** skill. The number of tests is determined by the threat level of the Shadow.

- For each failed roll, companions take Endurance Damage (determined by the engagement mood and modified by the results of the **Assault Wave Table** during Step 2: Tides of War.

- For each failed roll that also shows the eye icon, you and the players decide whether they took a Piercing Blow or if a Battle Hazard episode has been triggered. Resolve all Protection tests for

Piercing blows and apply the results immediately. For any Battle Hazards, roll on the **Battle Hazard Table** on p. 14 to determine the location of the episode. Choose an appropriate Battle Hazard and resolve the challenge if any companions are present. Heroes can spend a point of Hope to move to the area to participate in the Battle Hazard. Apply the negative consequences for any failed Battle Hazards or ones that went unmet.

4. Heroic Actions

To give the companions a chance to use their Common skills and earn Advancement points, you should...

- Allow each player-hero a minimum of one roll using a Common skill of their choice. They should narrate the results of their actions.

5. End of Battle

To determine if the conflict has come to an end, you should...

- Check the **Relative Strength of Numbers Table** on p. 9. If the statements have shifted to "The Shadow has Prevailed" or "The Free Peoples are Victorious!", then there is a decisive win for one side (no need for a **Last Stand** episode).

- Determine if either side wishes to retreat.

- Check to see if two icons have been rolled on the **Assault Wave Table**. If so, the Free Peoples are victorious (this is an optional rule).

- Check to see if two icons have been rolled on the **Assault Wave Table**. If so, the Shadow has prevailed (this rule is optional).

- If any of the above three items takes place, choose whether to play out a **Last Stand** episode. If yes, consult the **Last Stand Table** on p. 19 to determine what conditions are present based on the final roll on the **Assault Wave Table**. The results of a last stand will either improve or worsen things for the Free Peoples accordingly.

Appendix C:
Command Objectives

During Step 1: Opening Scene, commanders of the Free Peoples are given the opportunity to state command objectives. This happens at the start of every assault wave, but mostly prior to the start of a battle or siege during a pre-battle speech or during a war council.

Here are several strategies for using command objectives...

- During the opening scene, have the commander(s) state the overall goal and desire for the battle or siege, but leave the details in the abstract. For example, "We will defend our keep and force the enemy into retreat." As the results on the **Assault Wave Table** are obtained in regards to objectives, you should also leave them in the abstract. For example, if you rolled "The Line is Held," it reads: "The Free Peoples hold their line and keep fighting, winning one or two command objectives." To keep the results in the abstract, you would simply say, "The Free Peoples win a couple of battles, but nothing major happens as they hold the line."

- A second strategy would be to follow the same advise as above, but to allow for specific narration after the results have been obtained. So, instead of saying, "The Free Peoples win a couple of battles," you could offer narration (or request narration from the players) about what specific objectives they might have won. This could be something like, "The archers pick off many in the front line and stop all attempts at climbing the wall. And so the Free Peoples hold steady."

- Thirdly, the commander(s) could spell out very specific objectives at the top of every assault wave. The major and minor objectives should be marked as such. Major objectives are the overall goals, such as route the enemy from their stronghold or kill the enemy commander. Minor objectives are things such as getting the catapults into position or successfully reaching the gates. Regular command objectives are everything else, include things like: take out the guards, break through the gates, knock down the tower, and chase down retreating enemies. When the results on the **Assault Wave Table** are obtained, you and the players would decide which objectives have been completed. If the command objectives are listed in the order of the plan of attack, then this simply becomes a checklist for when the results are rolled during each assault wave.

Appendix D:
Summary of Awards & Honours

1. Awarding Treasure

If you would like some guidelines for awarding Treasure after a battle or siege, do the following...

- Every time a player-hero rolls a ᚠ during a Battle Hazard episode, Heroic action, or Last Stand episode, mark it down, along with any ᚷs rolled and the TN of the action that was resolved.
- Award the companion 1 point of Treasure for every ᚠ he rolled, 2 points of Treasure per ᚠ+ ᚷ, and 3 points of Treasure per ᚠ+ ᚷ+ ᚷ. If the TN for any roll was higher than 14, increase the award by 1 Treasure point per level of increase.

2. Increasing Standing

If you would like some guidelines for increasing a companion's Standing after a battle or siege, do the following...

- Add up the amount of Treasure a player-hero earns. If the amount is equal to his current Standing or higher, then increase his Standing by one point.

3. Additional Experience Point

If you would like some guidelines for giving additional Experience points after a battle or siege, do the following...

- If the heroes win a battle or siege, award them 1 bonus Experience point at the end of the session.
- If a companion performs valiantly, gaining several honours, award him 1 supplementary Experience point at the end of the adventuring phase.

Appendix E:
Siege of the Goblin City

The following tale is presented in narrative time mode using the Battle & Siege Resolution Rules.
It is meant to be an example of play and a teaching tool for your adventuring group
so that you can more fully understand the rules as intended.

Introduction

A small fellowship of three companions has answered Beorn's call to arms during the current adventuring phase. He has assembled a great company of mighty warriors assigned to route the remaining goblin forces infesting the Misty Mountains near the West Upper Vales. (The bulk of these creatures were killed during the Battle of Five Armies.) After marching roughly 110 miles north from Beorn's House, to a known goblin stronghold called Morgöng, they make camp and enter a war council before the attack.

Player 1 controls an experienced Woodman named Berangar the Bold One. Player 2 controls his younger but taller brother named Ander the Defender. And completing the fellowship of companions is Berangar's close friend, Dwanin Stonecutter, a Dwarf of the Lonely Mountain, controlled by Player 3.

Loremaster: In today's game, we will finish our adventure by telling the story of the final battle...

It is late summer in the year 2946. The sky above the Misty Mountains is swirling with storm clouds, threatening to pour out a torrential rain upon your heads as you approach the foot of a great rocky stair leading into Morgöng, the dark goblin stronghold. The leader of your company is a rugged Beorning warrior named Theodwin the Captain. Proud and wrathful, he has led many battles in the Vales of Anduin which have added to the tales of the already rich lore of his people. Holding his long-hafted axe tightly in his grip, Theodwin envisions the outcome of today's siege: the remnants of Bolg will be driven out of their tunnels and slaughtered on the stairs. The Free Peoples of Wilderland will have perfect peace at last.

- first assault wave -

Before we get started with the siege of the goblin city, let me describe for you a few details important to the action in Step 1: Opening Scene...

- Having the strength of five hundred warriors, you are significantly outnumbered by your enemies, whom you estimate at just under a thousand swords and several hundred bows.
- The average Attribute level of the Shadow is 3 (a *tormenting* threat), forcing each of you to make two Endurance tests per assault wave.
- After rolling a success die, I have determined that the engagement mood will begin as a *bold assault*, meaning that for each Endurance test you fail, you will lose 4 Endurance points.
- Theodwin the Captain will lay out the plan of attack...

"The day has finally arrived, my courageous brothers, to complete the job begun at Erebor five years ago. Long have we been patient as these foul creatures have terrorized the mountains and the woods. They have stolen our livestock and shed the blood of our innocents. Peace will not be had in the Wild as long as they remain. Enough of their violence and hatred - it ends today! Raise up your axes and your spears and give a shout! We lay siege to Morgöng!"

A deafening shout echoes in the mountains...

Theodwin chooses to lead the vanguard up the stairs to take the main gates. He assigns Berangar and Ander to join him in the effort *(The Main Assault)*. If you can capture the gates, you will gain access into Morgöng. One-hundred bowmen are dispatched to scale the rocks to the left *(On the Wall)* and another hundred remain at the foot of the stairs to cut off escape *(Engines of War)*. That is where he deploys Dwanin. Once inside the tunnels, the plan is to kill as many as you can, and smoke the rest out with fire.

Player 1 (Berangar): I would like an opportunity to affect the engagement mood, bringing it down to *wary and elusive*, so that we only take 2 Endurance points of Damage if we fail an Endurance test.

Loremaster: Explain how Berangar will intervene to make the battle less lethal on the Free Peoples.

Player 1 (Berangar): Berangar will try to convince Theodwin, using **Persuade** ♦♦, that instead of running straight into close combat, they should slowly approach, watching for goblin snipers and using strategic volleys from the bowmen *(On the Wall)* to take out the guards.

Loremaster: To persuade Theodwin to change tactics will require a successful roll against TN 14. To calm the mood of the battle by two levels, however, I am requiring a great or extraordinary success.

Player 1 (Berangar): I roll the dice and get... 7, 1, and... 6. That's exactly 14 and a great success!

As I listen to the Captain give the orders, his pride and determination inspires us all. I look around and see the hope of victory on each face. For my brother Ander, however, I have great concern. He is inexperienced in battle and I did not bring him here to die in these black mountains. I speak my mind with respect for our leader...

"We all believe in victory, my Captain, but I promised our mother I would bring Ander home. Surely she is baking his favourite rolls as we speak, thinking of his safe return." All the men laugh and poke fun at Ander. "Let us save our fury for the tunnels and be wary in taking the gates. As a child I spent many long days and nights underground, working in the mines above Mountain Hall. When we enter the goblin city today, I will be at home and so will my axe. What good will it be for this great company, if we do not live through the charge. This is the enemies' last stand. It would be wise to take precaution against their desperate volleys and vile schemes. Besides, I want a chance to use my shepherds-bow - it was a gift of love I do not wish to squander."

Theodwin ponders my words for a moment, and with great confidence he re-directs our men to follow my strategy.

Loremaster: Having successfully persuaded your commander to change tactics, the engagement mood will begin as *wary and elusive* and you will only take 2 points of Damage each time you fail an Endurance test.

It is now time for Step 2: Tides of War as we commence the first assault wave! I roll the Feat die on the **Assault Wave Table** and get a result of 9 — the Night is Ending. This means your strategies have paid off and you will complete a few command objectives as well as shift the relative strength of numbers to *"Both sides are near enough **evenly sized**."*

I would like your perspective on this part of the battle Player 2 (Ander). But, before you narrate the assault, let's complete Step 3: Blood & Tears to find out the results of individual Endurance tests.

Using the **Areas of Engagement Table** as a guide, Endurance tests among *The Main Assault* are made at TN 18, while TN 12 tests are made at the *Engines of War.*

Player 1 (Berangar): I have **Battle** ♦♦ and roll 14 and then 10. That's two failures, so I take 4 Damage, dropping my Endurance from 25 to 21.

Player 2 (Ander): I have **Battle** ♦ and roll a 2 with the 👁 — yikes! Then I roll 8. That's two failures also, so I take 4 Damage, dropping my Endurance from 24 to 20. Because I failed and rolled the 👁, can I let that be a Piercing Blow or do I have to trigger a Battle Hazard?

Loremaster: I would rather it be a Piercing Blow to avoid going into episode mode right now. You should make a Protection test (TN 14) to keep from taking a Wound.

Player 2 (Ander): I have Armour 1d+1 because I am wearing a leather shirt and cap. I roll 11, a failure. Can I spend a point of Hope to add my Body 3 as an Attribute bonus? I don't want to take a Wound at this point.

Loremaster: Yes, you may. That was close! Player 3 (Dwanin), please make your two rolls against TN 12.

Player 3 (Dwanin): I have **Battle** ♦♦♦ and roll 12 and then 17, both successes! So, I take no Damage this assault wave.

Loremaster: Back to Player 2 (Ander) — could you give us your perspective on the siege so far?

Player 2 (Ander): Sure, I will give this a try...

It is very quiet as we climb the stairs toward the gates. The bowmen among us are alert and drawn. The smell of goblins gets stronger and more foul the higher we ascend. As I look into the rocky cliffs for archers, the rain begins to fall and I lose my footing slightly. We spot a few creatures hiding in the clefts above us and quickly dispatch them while continuing forward.

As the stairs level off, we can see hundreds of goblins with swords and shields guarding the gates. Theodwin holds us back until our archers are in place *(On the Wall)*. Before long, a hail of arrows strikes many of the goblins down, their bodies falling in heaps everywhere. This draws their attention to the left among the rocks. The Captain takes advantage of their distraction and we charge in with axes and spears at his order.

In my excitement, I get out ahead too far and an arrow clips my shoulder. That makes me angry and intense resolve rushes into my body. How I wish my dogs were here to help me in battle. I suddenly understand their eagerness to hunt prey despite sore paws and a bloodied tongue from the fields. When I finally kill my first goblin up close, however, I turn away, not wanting to see its face. I hope my brother didn't notice this.

As the day draws on, we eventually win the gates of Morgöng and the hope of victory increases all the more.

Loremaster: Very nice Player 2 (Ander). We now move on to Step 4: Heroic Actions. Each of you may attempt one common skill roll for the chance to earn an Advancement point and add to the tale.

Player 3 (Dwanin): I would like to use my **Craft** ♦♦♦ to start building a barrier wall at the foot of the stairs. I roll 18 (regular success), but I invoke *Stone-craft* to ask for the Advancement point.

Loremaster: Advancement point granted...

During the battle at the gates, Dwanin Stonecutter of the rearguard built a strong wall of stone at the foot of the stairs.

Player 1 (Berangar): Since we approached our enemies with caution, I would like to make a roll using my **Stealth** ♦♦. I only roll 6. Bummer. That would explain my Endurance loss this assault wave.

Player 2 (Ander): I would also like to roll using my **Stealth** ♦♦♦ for the same reasons.

Loremaster: Because the rain has caused you to lose your footing, and this is your first time in battle, I am going to make this a *daunting* task (TN 20). If you overcome it, you will earn an Advancement point.

Player 2 (Ander): Ok. Here goes... I roll a ᚠ+ ᚷ — a great success!

Loremaster: You not only earn the Advancement point, but if you survive today's battle, you will earn 5 points of Treasure for your heroic actions! That's 2 points for rolling the ᚠ+ ᚷ and another 3 points for TN 20. This will also increase your Standing by 1 point.

It was Ander the Defender, despite the slippery rain and his first-time in battle, who saved many lives by his example of stealth at the onset. He carefully chose the path up the stairs, using rocks and shadows to evade the enemies' gaze and all three hundred men made it to the melee at the gates.

For Step 5: End of Battle, I see that the relative strength of numbers has not reached a decisive victory and neither side is retreating. Therefore, the siege continues with a second assault wave.

- second assault wave -

Theodwin drove right through the piles of guards and rushed forward into the mountain tunnels...

Beginning with Step 1: Opening Scene, let me describe what you're facing...

- Both sides are near enough evenly sized. You had a huge advantage in the first assault wave, causing many more casualties than taking them. Hundreds of goblins lay in heaps at the gates of Morgöng.
- The Threat level of the Shadow remains at *tormenting* and each of you are required to make 2 Endurance tests this assault wave.
- Once you enter the tunnels, the action intensifies everywhere. I have determined that the engagement mood will rise from *wary and elusive* to *grim determination*. You will stop at nothing to route the goblins and have stirred up their hatred. For every failed Endurance test, you will take 5 points of Damage.
- The areas of engagement remain the same: Theodwin, Berangar, and Ander at *The Main Assault*, Dwanin at *Engines of War*, and no companions *On the Wall*.

Player 1 (Berangar): Can I have a chance to affect the engagement mood again?

Loremaster: Actually, I am going to say, "no." I would like to speed up the story and I think there are good reasons to keep the mood the way I have set it.

We move to Step 2: Tides of War and roll on the **Assault Wave Table**. I roll a ᚠ — Will of the West! The Free Peoples will accomplish exactly what they wanted to in this assault and the relative strength of numbers will shift two steps down to *"The Shadow remnant is **overpowered in numbers** by the Free Peoples."*

Down the hallways and throughout the caverns you press the attack, forcing the goblins to die or flee. Smoke can be seen rising from the cracks in the mountainside as you light fires in each chamber below. Outside, your bowman pick off the soldiers trying to escape, and the wall you have erected blocks their descent down the stairs.

Now it is time for Step 3: Blood & Tears. Each of you will make 2 Endurance tests.

Player 1 (Berangar): I have **Battle** ♦♦ and I'm up against TN 18. I roll 16, a failure. I would like to spend a point of Hope to add my Heart 5 as an Attribute bonus to succeed. Then, I roll 12, another failure. I take 5 Damage, dropping my Endurance from 21 to 16.

Player 2 (Ander): Again, I only have **Battle** ♦ and I'm up against TN 18, so I'm hoping for a ᚠ or I'm in big trouble. On my first roll I get a 9, a failure. On my second roll, I get a ᚠ like I wanted! So, I take 5 Damage, dropping my Endurance from 20 to 15.

Loremaster: Because you rolled a ᚠ at TN 18, you will also earn another 3 Treasure points if you survive the siege. Congratulations on your valourous acts so far!

Player 3 (Dwanin): I have **Battle** ♦♦♦ and I'm up against TN 12. I pass one of those rolls, but I fail one of them showing the 👁 icon. What should I do besides take 4 points of Damage and drop to 26 Endurance points?

Loremaster: Randomly, I determine you have triggered a Battle Hazard episode. I roll a Feat die on

the **Battle Hazard Table** and get a 5 — *Skirmishers* position. Since this is not an active area of engagement, I look at the table and determine that *The Main Assault* is the next legitimate position down. I choose "**Protect the Commander**" for a Battle Hazard.

It seems that Theodwin the Captain has gotten himself into a bit of trouble. He is being attacked by a full compliment of Orc soldiers (three) with spears. Berangar and Ander, you must not allow your Captain to take a Wound or he will die. He is considered to be in Forward stance and you must use the *Protect Companion* special combat task to defend him (you will be in Defensive stance). Since there are three of them, one of you will have to spend 2 points of Hope defending him twice, while the other will only spend 1 point defending him once. If you choose not to defend him, Theodwin's Parry rating is 5 and his armour rating is 2d. There is a chance that the goblins will not Wound him and kill him, but is it worth the risk?

The Battle Hazard is complete after all three enemies' attacks have been resolved. There is no need to play out the rest of the scene.

Player 1 (Berangar): Since I am the veteran, and the older brother, I will spend 2 points of Hope to defend him twice.

Loremaster: Very well. The Orc soldier jabs his spear at Theodwin, but you step in the way. He has **Spear ♦♦** and rolls against TN 17 (12 stance + your 5 Parry). The first Orc's roll misses, but the second Orc's roll hits with an 👁 + 6, a great success. That will do 8 Damage and is a Piercing blow. You will need to make a Protection test against the Injury rating of the spear (12).

Player 1 (Berangar): My armour rating is just 1d. I fail my roll miserably and take a Wound. I am also Weary now, because my Endurance has dropped from 16 to 8 (my Fatigue score is 10).

Player 2 (Ander): I decide not to spend a point of Hope to defend the Captain. If I should take Damage, I will become Weary, and besides, I am in shock that my brother has taken a Wound.

Loremaster: The third Orc soldier attacks Theodwin with his **Spear ♦♦**. The Captain's TN is 11 (6 stance + 5 parry). He rolls 14 and a Piercing blow!

Player 2 (Ander): You've gotta be kidding...

Loremaster: Unfortunately not. Theodwin rolls a Protection test using his 2d armour rating against the spear's Injury 12. He fails the roll by getting an 8 and suffers a Wound. Since he is a Loremaster character... this means he also dies. You guys have failed the Battle Hazard and you will not be able to invoke Attribute bonuses on any Endurance tests for the rest of the siege.

Can I get your perspective on this scene, Player 1 (Berangar)?

Player 1 (Berangar): Oh, brother...sure.

Running behind the Captain, we are suddenly stopped by three goblin spearmen who have jumped onto the rickety bridge we are crossing. They thrust their weapons forward and I quickly throw my body in front of Theodwin. One of the spears I deflect, but a second one pierces my thigh and I fall down onto the bridge. The third spear continues ahead...

"Defend him Ander!" I yell in that moment.

But looking over my shoulder, time seems to stand still as I see the third spear glide through the center of the Captain's body. Ander is frozen in place beside him, staring in shock. Theodwin falls over the side of the bridge into the chasm below.

Loremaster: This scene calls for a Corruption test (TN 14). It is a moment of anguish. If you fail and get an 👁 result, you will gain 1 Shadow point.

Player 1 (Berangar): I have Wisdom 1 and fail my roll without an 👁.

Player 2 (Ander): I have Wisdom 2. I pass my roll, but I am deeply sorrowful. I have failed the very name my father gave me — "The Defender."

Loremaster: We now move to Step 4: Heroic Actions. What would you like to do?

Player 3 (Dwanin): I would like to make a roll of **Awareness** ♦ to keep an eye on any goblins trying to escape the siege.

Loremaster: If you fail this roll, I have decided you will also force a re-roll on the **Assault Wave Table** next time and have to keep the worst result. It will be a TN 14 task.

Player 3 (Dwanin): Whoa! That's a seriously negative consequence. Ok. I roll 10, but I spend a point of Hope to gain my favoured Body 10 to succeed.

Loremaster: Very well. You earn the first Advancement point in your Perception skill group and no goblins get by you.

Player 1 (Berangar): I would like to encourage Ander to never give up by using my **Inspire** ♦♦. I will tell him my true feelings: he may be my younger brother, but I have always admired him and knew that he would be a great warrior.

I succeed on the TN 14 roll with a ᛉ and I invoke my *True-hearted* Trait to gain an Advancement point.

Loremaster: You certainly gain the Advancement point and you will also gain 1 point of Treasure if you survive the siege.

Player 2 (Ander): After getting to a safe spot, I would like to use my **Healing** ♦♦♦ to treat my brother's Wound so that he will not be dying if he is reduced to zero Endurance.

Loremaster: Based on the fact that there is a high chance Berangar could be reduced to zero Endurance before the end of the siege, and that a failed Healing roll cannot be repeated for at least a day, I would consider this roll to carry potentially serious negative consequences. If you succeed, you may earn the Advancement point. The TN is 14.

Player 2 (Ander): When you put it that way, it makes me a little nervous. I roll...25! No sweat. Berangar's Wound is now treated.

Loremaster: Step 5: End of Battle comes next and after checking everything, the siege will continue on. These creatures are not giving up that easily.

- third assault wave -

After being smoked and chased out of their stronghold, the last bands of goblins put up a terribly desperate fight.

Let's begin with Step 1: Opening Scene...

- After the success of the second assault wave, the Free Peoples now overpower the Shadow remnant in numbers. Everything has gone exceptionally well and with one more victory, peace will finally come to the Vales of Anduin.
- The Threat level of the Shadow has not changed. Each of you will be required to make 2 Endurance tests this assault wave.
- The mood of the siege could not be any more furious. It is truly a *wrath kindled to madness*, which means that each of you will take 6 Damage when you fail an Endurance test.
- The areas of engagement have not changed, nor have the Free Peoples core tactics.

Player 1 (Berangar): I am Wounded, Weary, and I only have 8 Endurance points left. If I fail both of my Endurance rolls, I am going to fall unconscious. I am requesting a re-deployment to the *Engines of War* with Dwanin.

Loremaster: Very well.

Having suffered in battle, Berangar leaves the main assault to find respite among the soldiers at the foot of the stairs. He is received by his great friend Dwanin, who does not let him out of his sight ever again, even beyond that day.

Player 3 (Dwanin): Please allow me to affect the mood of the engagement. I want to sing a Dwarven melody that is meant to bring calmness, even in battle. I will use **Song** ♦♦ against whatever TN you set.

Loremaster: That will be a *hard* (TN 16) task. If you succeed, the mood will shift down one level. If you get a great or extraordinary success, it will shift two levels.

Player 3 (Dwanin): I roll a great success! So the battle is now *a bold assault* and we will only take 4 Damage for every failed Endurance test.

Loremaster: Wait a second! Not so fast. We want to hear this peaceful Dwarven melody. Don't we boys?

Players 1 & 2: Nah! Please spare us the earaches!

Loremaster: Well, okay then... We'll move on to Step 2: Tides of War. I make a roll on the **Assault Wave Table** and I get a 5 — The Line is Held. This means the relative strength of numbers does not change, but you still win a couple of command objectives. One of those objectives must be keeping the goblins from escaping down the stairs.

For Step 3: Blood & Tears, each of you will make two Endurance tests. Player 1 (Berangar), since you moved to the *Engines of War* position, you will be rolling against TN 12 from now on.

Player 1 (Berangar): Once again, I have **Battle** ♦♦. I pass my first roll and fail the second because I'm Weary. So, I take 4 Damage and I now have 4 Endurance points left.

Player 2 (Ander): Having only **Battle** ♦, I am most likely going to fail, but I want to stay in *The Main Assault* to finish out the siege. I fail my first roll and I lose 4 Endurance points, dropping me from 15 to 11. That also makes me Weary since my Fatigue score is also 11. But for my second roll I get another ᚠ!

Loremaster: Because you stayed in *The Main Assault* against TN 18, that will be another 3 points of Treasure awarded. If you survive, I think you've earned 11 points of Treasure so far.

Ander plows through the thick of the goblin frenzy, his axe blade slicing and chopping in a blur of motion. But this he does at great peril to himself, for the hatred of the goblins has increased their threat and just as many allies are slain in that hour.

Player 3 (Dwanin): I have **Battle** ♦♦♦ and I'm rolling against TN 12. I fail my first roll, but pass my last two rolls. I take 4 Damage and drop from 26 to 22 Endurance points.

Loremaster: For Step 4: Heroic Actions, would any of you like to make a roll?

Players 1, 2, & 3: Not this assault wave.

Loremaster: Alright, then we'll move on to Step 5: End of Battle. Even though the relative strength of numbers did not change this assault wave, I have decided that the morale of the goblins has been crushed (they are Craven) and they believe they have no chance to win. They are going to try and escape to the north up the side of the mountain and live to fight another day.

The choice you need to make is whether to let them go freely or to play out a Last Stand episode where you try and crush them completely. If you decide to do that, the **Last Stand Table** indicates that "The Line is Held" result (which was the final roll on the **Assault Wave Table**) means you will fight under *bad conditions*. This means each of you will face three Orc Soldiers. How well you do against the Orcs will also reflect how your allies fare against their opponents. If you defeat the goblins completely, it will indicate that your allies have tracked down the remaining creatures and killed them. But if any of you are defeated, at least a few Orcs escape into the north.

What do you want to do?

Players 1, 2, & 3: We will let them retreat into the north without a fight and celebrate our victory!

Loremaster: Player 3 (Dwanin), could you give us your perspective on the end of battle?

Player 3 (Dwanin): Absolutely!

The clouds thinned and the rain began to cease. Warm light flooded the battlefield. In the thick, where Ander was, the enemy tried to scatter, but they feared our archers on the south slope. And when they tried to flee down the stairs, our wall turned them back. Finally, with no alternative path of escape, the last bands of goblins scaled the north wall. Toward Gundabad they slithered away, and we had not the energy to pursue them...

Morgöng fell easily that day and we liberated the lands of the Beornings and the Woodmen from the goblin bane. Victory and hope were ours, but it was not without a cost: The body of Theodwin the Captain had been lost in the deep under the mountain, having been pierced through by a spear. Although we were saddened, his memory lives on in our hearts.

During our celebration, a great amount of treasure was awarded to Ander the Defender. For although it was his first battle, he performed valiantly beyond expectation and earned the abiding respect of his older brother ~ Berangar the Bold. He returned to Woodland Hall a hero and one day he will become a great chieftain among his folk.

As for me, I convinced Berangar that it was time for happier days. I wrote to my father in Lake-town and we are making plans to return there to work as soon as his wound heals. In the meantime, Beorn has offered us protection at his House and a personal escort when we're ready to leave...